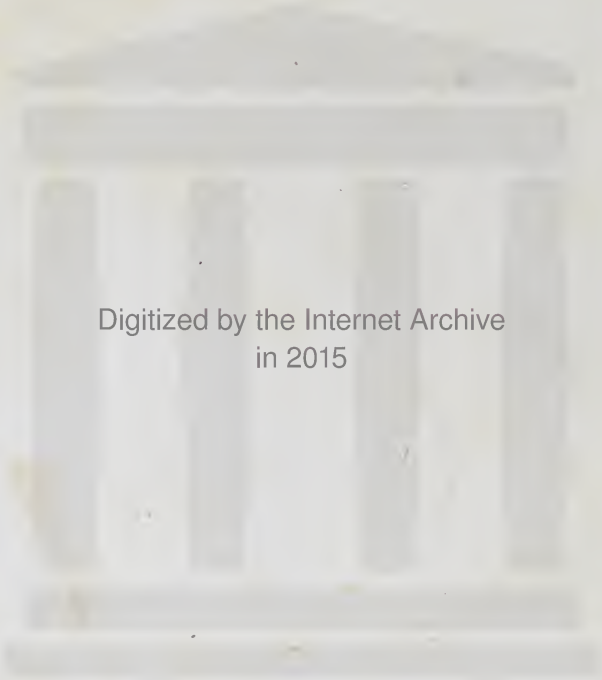
*Huntly at New Bond Street.*

Henry W. Acland. F.R.S.
Oxford



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THE

# WORKS

OF

# SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, KNIGHT;

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

CONTAINING

HIS DISCOURSES, IDLERS,

A JOURNEY TO FLANDERS AND HOLLAND,

AND HIS COMMENTARY ON DU FRESNOY'S ART OF PAINTING;

PRINTED FROM HIS REVISED COPIES,

(WITH HIS LAST CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS)

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF THE AUTHOR,

## BY EDMOND MALONE, ESQ.

ONE OF HIS EXECUTORS.

THE FOURTH EDITION CORRECTED.

—QUASI NON EA PRÆCIPIAM ALIIS, QUÆ MIHI IPSI DESUNT. CICERO.

## VOLUME THE SECOND.

*LONDON:*

PRINTED FOR T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, IN THE STRAND,

By C. and R. Baldwin, New Bridge-street.

1809.

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# DISCOURSE IX.

DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

IN

SOMERSET-PLACE,

OCTOBER 16, 1780.

# DISCOURSE IX.

ON THE REMOVAL OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY TO SOMERSET-PLACE.—THE ADVANTAGES TO SOCIETY FROM CULTIVATING INTELLECTUAL PLEASURE.

GENTLEMEN,

THE honour which the Arts acquire by being permitted to take possession of this noble habitation, is one of the most considerable of the many instances we have received of his Majesty's protection; and the strongest proof of his desire to make the Academy respectable.

Nothing has been left undone, that might contribute to excite our pursuit, or to reward our attainments. We have already the happiness of seeing the Arts in a state to which they never before arrived in this nation. This Building, in which we are now assembled, will remain to many future ages an illustrious

specimen of the Architect's * abilities. It is our duty to endeavour that those who gaze with wonder at the structure, may not be disappointed when they visit the apartments. It will be no small addition to the glory which this nation has already acquired from having given birth to eminent men in every part of science, if it should be enabled to produce, in consequence of this institution, a School of English Artists. The estimation in which we stand in respect to our neighbours, will be in proportion to the degree in which we excel or are inferior to them in the acquisition of intellectual excellence, of which Trade and its consequential riches must be acknowledged to give the means; but a people whose whole attention is absorbed in those means, and who forget the end, can aspire but little above the rank of a barbarous nation. Every establishment that tends to the cultivation of the pleasures of the mind, as distinct from those of sense, may be considered as an inferior school of morality, where the mind is polished and prepared for higher attainments.

* Sir William Chambers.

Let us for a moment take a short survey of the progress of the mind towards what is, or ought to be, its true object of attention. Man, in his lowest state, has no pleasures but those of sense, and no wants but those of appetite; afterwards, when society is divided into different ranks, and some are appointed to labour for the support of others, those whom their superiority sets free from labour, begin to look for intellectual entertainments. Thus, whilst the shepherds were attending their flocks, their masters made the first astronomical observations; so musick is said to have had its origin from a man at leisure listening to the strokes of a hammer.

As the senses, in the lowest state of nature, are necessary to direct us to our support, when that support is once secure there is danger in following them further; to him who has no rule of action but the gratification of the senses, plenty is always dangerous: it is therefore necessary to the happiness of individuals, and still more necessary to the security of society, that the mind should be elevated to the idea of general beauty, and

the contemplation of general truth; by this pursuit the mind is always carried forward in search of something more excellent than it finds, and obtains its proper superiority over the common senses of life, by learning to feel itself capable of higher aims and nobler enjoyments. In this gradual exaltation of human nature, every art contributes its contingent towards the general supply of mental pleasure. Whatever abstracts the thoughts from sensual gratifications, whatever teaches us to look for happiness within ourselves, must advance in some measure the dignity of our nature.

Perhaps there is no higher proof of the excellency of man than this,—that to a mind properly cultivated whatever is bounded is little. The mind is continually labouring to advance, step by step, through successive gradations of excellence, towards perfection, which is dimly seen, at a great though not hopeless distance, and which we must always follow because we never can attain; but the pursuit rewards itself: one truth teaches another, and our store is always

increasing, though nature can never be exhausted. Our art, like all arts which address the imagination, is applied to somewhat a lower faculty of the mind, which approaches nearer to sensuality; but through sense and fancy it must make its way to reason; for such is the progress of thought, that we perceive by sense, we combine by fancy, and distinguish by reason: and without carrying our art out of its natural and true character, the more we purify it from every thing that is gross in sense, in that proportion we advance its use and dignity; and in proportion as we lower it to mere sensuality, we pervert its nature, and degrade it from the rank of a liberal art; and this is what every artist ought well to remember. Let him remember also, that he deserves just so much encouragement in the state as he makes himself a member of it virtuously useful, and contributes in his sphere to the general purpose and perfection of society.

The Art which we profess has beauty for its object; this it is our business to discover and to express; the beauty of which we

are in quest is general and intellectual; it is an idea that subsists only in the mind; the sight never beheld it, nor has the hand expressed it: it is an idea residing in the breast of the artist, which he is always labouring to impart, and which he dies at last without imparting; but which he is yet so far able to communicate, as to raise the thoughts, and extend the views of the spectator; and which, by a succession of art, may be so far diffused, that its effects may extend themselves imperceptibly into publick benefits, and be among the means of bestowing on whole nations refinement of taste: which, if it does not lead directly to purity of manners, obviates at least their greatest depravation, by disentangling the mind from appetite, and conducting the thoughts through successive stages of excellence, till that contemplation of universal rectitude and harmony which began by Taste, may, as it is exalted and refined, conclude in Virtue.

# DISCOURSE X.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES.

DECEMBER 11, 1780.

# DISCOURSE X.

SCULPTURE:—HAS BUT ONE STYLE.—ITS OBJECTS, FORM, AND CHARACTER.—INEFFECTUAL ATTEMPTS OF THE MODERN SCULPTORS TO IMPROVE THE ART.—ILL EFFECTS OF MODERN DRESS IN SCULPTURE.

GENTLEMEN,

I SHALL now, as it has been customary on this day, and on this occasion, communicate to you such observations as have occurred to me on the Theory of Art.

If these observations have hitherto referred principally to Painting, let it be remembered that this Art is much more extensive and complicated than Sculpture, and affords therefore a more ample field for criticism; and as the greater includes the less, the leading principles of Sculpture are comprised in those of Painting.

However, I wish now to make some

remarks with particular relation to Sculpture; to consider wherein, or in what manner, its principles and those of Painting agree or differ; what is within its power of performing, and what it is vain or improper to attempt; that it may be clearly and distinctly known what ought to be the great purpose of the Sculptor's labours.

Sculpture is an art of much more simplicity and uniformity than Painting; it cannot with propriety, and the best effect, be applied to many subjects. The object of its pursuit may be comprised in two words, Form and Character; and those qualities are presented to us but in one manner, or in one style only; whereas the powers of Painting, as they are more various and extensive, so they are exhibited in as great a variety of manners. The Roman, Lombard, Florentine, Venetian, and Flemish Schools, all pursue the same end by different means. But Sculpture having but one style, can only to one style of painting have any relation; and to this (which is indeed the highest and most dignified that Painting can boast), it has a relation so close,

that it may be said to be almost the same art operating upon different materials. The Sculptors of the last age, from not attending sufficiently to this discrimination of the different styles of Painting, have been led into many errors. Though they well knew that they were allowed to imitate, or take ideas for the improvement of their own Art from the grand style of Painting, they were not aware that it was not permitted to borrow in the same manner from the ornamental. When they endeavour to copy the picturesque effects, contrasts, or petty excellencies of whatever kind, which not improperly find a place in the inferior branches of Painting, they doubtless imagine themselves improving and extending the boundaries of their art by this imitation; but they are in reality violating its essential character, by giving a different direction to its operations, and proposing to themselves either what is unattainable, or at best a meaner object of pursuit. The grave and austere character of Sculpture requires the utmost degree of formality in composition; picturesque contrasts have here no place; every thing is carefully weighed and

measured, one side making almost an exact equipoise to the other: a child is not a proper balance to a full grown figure, nor is a figure sitting or stooping a companion to an upright figure.

The excellence of every art must consist in the complete accomplishment of its purpose; and if by a false imitation of nature, or mean ambition of producing a picturesque effect or illusion of any kind, all the grandeur of ideas which this art endeavours to excite, be degraded or destroyed, we may boldly oppose ourselves to any such innovation. If the producing of a deception is the summit of this art, let us at once give to statues the addition of colour; which will contribute more towards accomplishing this end, than all those artifices which have been introduced and professedly defended, on no other principle but that of rendering the work more natural. But as colour is universally rejected, every practice liable to the same objection must fall with it. If the business of Sculpture were to administer pleasure to ignorance, or a mere entertainment to the senses, the

Venus of Medicis might certainly receive much improvement by colour; but the character of Sculpture makes it her duty to afford delight of a different, and, perhaps, of a higher kind; the delight resulting from the contemplation of perfect beauty: and this, which is in truth an intellectual pleasure, is in many respects incompatible with what is merely addressed to the senses, such as that with which ignorance and levity contemplate elegance of form.

The Sculptor may be safely allowed to practise every means within the power of his art to produce a deception, provided this practice does not interfere with or destroy higher excellencies; on these conditions he will be forced, however loth, to acknowledge that the boundaries of his art have long been fixed, and that all endeavours will be vain that hope to pass beyond the best works which remain of ancient Sculpture.

Imitation is the means, and not the end, of art; it is employed by the Sculptor as the language by which his ideas are presented to

the mind of the spectator. Poetry and elocution of every sort make use of signs, but those signs are arbitrary and conventional. The sculptor employs the representation of the thing itself; but still as a means to a higher end,—as a gradual ascent always advancing towards faultless form and perfect beauty. It may be thought at the first view, that even this form, however perfectly represented, is to be valued and take its rank only for the sake of a still higher object, that of conveying sentiment and character, as they are exhibited by attitude, and expression of the passions. But we are sure from experience, that the beauty of form alone, without the assistance of any other quality, makes of itself a great work, and justly claims our esteem and admiration. As a proof of the high value we set on the mere excellence of form, we may produce the greatest part of the works of Michael Angelo, both in painting and sculpture; as well as most of the antique statues, which are justly esteemed in a very high degree, though no very marked or striking character or expression of any kind is represented.

But, as a stronger instance that this excellence alone inspires sentiment, what artist ever looked at the Torso without feeling a warmth of enthusiasm, as from the highest efforts of poetry? From whence does this proceed? What is there in this fragment that produces this effect, but the perfection of this science of abstract form?

A mind elevated to the contemplation of excellence, perceives in this defaced and shattered fragment, *disjecti membra poetæ*, the traces of superlative genius, the reliques of a work on which succeeding ages can only gaze with inadequate admiration.

It may be said that this pleasure is reserved only to those who have spent their whole life in the study and contemplation of this art; but the truth is, that all would feel its effects, if they could divest themselves of the expectation of *deception*, and look only for what it really is, a *partial* representation of nature. The only impediment of their judgement must then proceed from their being uncertain to what rank, or rather kind of excellence, it

aspires; and to what sort of approbation it has a right. This state of darkness is, without doubt, irksome to every mind; but by attention to works of this kind the knowledge of what is aimed at comes of itself, without being taught, and almost without being perceived.

The Sculptor's art is limited in comparison of others, but it has it's variety and intricacy within its proper bounds. Its essence is correctness: and when to correct and perfect form is added the ornament of grace, dignity of character, and appropriated expression, as in the Apollo, the Venus, the Laocoon, the Moses of Michael Angelo, and many others, this art may be said to have accomplished its purpose.

What Grace is, how it is to be acquired or conceived, are in speculation difficult questions; but *causa latet*, *res est notissima*: without any perplexing inquiry, the effect is hourly perceived. I shall only observe, that its natural foundation is correctness of design; and though grace may be some-

times united with incorrectness, it cannot proceed from it.

But to come nearer to our present subject. It has been said that the grace of the Apollo depends on a certain degree of incorrectness; that the head is not anatomically placed between the shoulders; and that the lower half of the figure is longer than just proportion allows.

I know that Correggio and Parmegiano are often produced as authorities to support this opinion; but very little attention will convince us, that the incorrectness of some parts which we find in their works, does not contribute to grace, but rather tends to destroy it. The Madonna, with the sleeping Infant, and beautiful group of Angels, by Parmegiano, in the Palazzo Piti, would not have lost any of its excellence, if the neck, fingers, and indeed the whole figure of the Virgin, instead of being so very long and incorrect, had preserved their due proportion.

In opposition to the first of these remarks,

I have the authority of a very able Sculptor of this Academy, who has copied that figure, consequently measured and carefully examined it, to declare, that the criticismis not true. In regard to the last, it must be remembered that Apollo is here in the exertion of one of his peculiar powers, which is swiftness; he has therefore that proportion which is best adapted to that character. This is no more incorrectness, than when there is given to an Hercules an extraordinary swelling and strength of muscles.

The art of discovering and expressing grace is difficult enough of itself, without perplexing ourselves with what is incomprehensible. A supposition of such a monster as Grace, begot by Deformity, is poison to the mind of a young Artist, and may make him neglect what is essential to his art, correctness of Design, in order to pursue a phantom, which has no existence but in the imagination of affected and refined speculators.

I cannot quit the Apollo, without making

one observation on the character of this figure. He is supposed to have just discharged his arrow at the Python; and, by the head retreating a little towards the right shoulder, he appears attentive to its effect. What I would remark, is the difference of this attention from that of the Discobolus, who is engaged in the same purpose, watching the effect of his Discus. The graceful, negligent, though animated, air of the one, and the vulgar eagerness of the other, furnish a signal instance of the judgement of the ancient Sculptors in their nice discrimination of character. They are both equally true to nature, and equally admirable.

It may be remarked, that Grace, Character, and Expression, though words of different sense and meaning, and so understood when applied to the works of Painters, are indiscriminately used when we speak of Sculpture. This indecision we may suspect to proceed from the undetermined effects of the Art itself; those qualities are exhibited in Sculpture rather by form and attitude than by the features, and can

therefore be expressed but in a very general manner.

Though the Laocoon and his two sons have more expression in the countenance than perhaps any other antique statues, yet it is only the general expression of pain; and this passion is still more strongly expressed by the writhing and contortion of the body than by the features.

It has been observed in a late publication, that if the attention of the Father in this group had been occupied more by the distress of his children, than by his own sufferings, it would have raised a much greater interest in the spectator. Though this observation comes from a person whose opinion, in every thing relating to the Arts, carries with it the highest authority, yet I cannot but suspect that such refined expression is scarce within the province of this Art; and in attempting it, the Artist will run great risk of enfeebling expression, and making it less intelligible to the spectator.

As the general figure presents itself in a more conspicuous manner than the features, it is there we must principally look for expression or character; *patuit in corpore vultus*; and, in this respect, the Sculptor's art is not unlike that of Dancing, where the attention of the spectator is principally engaged by the attitude and action of the performer; and it is there he must look for whatever expression that art is capable of exhibiting. The Dancers themselves acknowledge this, by often wearing masks, with little diminution in the expression. The face bears so very inconsiderable a proportion to the effect of the whole figure, that the ancient Sculptors neglected to animate the features, even with the general expression of the passions. Of this the group of the Boxers is a remarkable instance; they are engaged in the most animated action with the greatest serenity of countenance. This is not recommended for imitation, (for there can be no reason why the countenance should not correspond with the attitude and expression of the figure,) but is mentioned in order to infer from hence, that this frequent deficiency in ancient Sculp-

ture could proceed from nothing but a habit of inattention to what was considered as comparatively immaterial.

Those who think Sculpture can express more than we have allowed, may ask, by what means we discover, at the first glance, the character that is represented in a Bust, Cameo, or Intaglio? I suspect it will be found, on close examination, by him who is resolved not to see more than he really does see, that the figures are distinguished by their *insignia* more than by any variety of form or beauty. Take from Apollo his Lyre, from Bacchus his Thirsus and Vine-leaves, and Meleager the Boar's Head, and there will remain little or no difference in their characters. In a Juno, Minerva, or Flora, the idea of the artist seems to have gone no further than representing perfect beauty, and afterwards adding the proper attributes, with a total indifference to which they gave them. Thus John De Bologna, after he had finished a group of a young man holding up a young woman in his arms, with an old man at his feet, called his friends

together, to tell him what name he should give it, and it was agreed to call it The Rape of the Sabines*; and this is the celebrated group which now stands before the old Palace at Florence. The figures have the same general expression which is to be found in most of the antique Sculpture; and yet it would be no wonder if future criticks should find out delicacy of expression which was never intended; and go so far as to see, in the old man's countenance, the exact relation which he bore to the woman who appears to be taken from him.

Though Painting and Sculpture are, like many other arts, governed by the same general principles, yet in the detail, or what may be called the by-laws of each art, there seems to be no longer any connection between them. The different materials upon which those two arts exert their powers, must infallibly create a proportional difference in their practice. There are many petty excellencies which the Painter attains with ease, but which are impracticable in Sculpture; and which, even if

* See *Il reposo di Raffaelle Borghini*.

it could accomplish them, would add nothing to the true value and dignity of the work.

Of the ineffectual attempts which the modern Sculptors have made by way of improvement, these seem to be the principal; The practice of detaching drapery from the figure, in order to give the appearance of flying in the air;—

Of making different plans in the same bas-relievos;

Of attempting to represent the effects of perspective:—

To these we may add the ill effect of figures cloathed in a modern dress.

The folly of attempting to make stone sport and flutter in the air, is so apparent, that it carries with it its own reprehension; and yet to accomplish this, seemed to be the great ambition of many modern Sculptors, particularly Bernini: his heart was so much set on overcoming this difficulty, that he was

for ever attempting it, though by that attempt he risked every thing that was valuable in the art.

Bernini stands in the first class of modern Sculptors, and therefore it is the business of criticism to prevent the ill effects of so powerful an example.

From his very early work of Apollo and Daphne, the world justly expected he would rival the best productions of ancient Greece; but he soon strayed from the right path. And though there is in his works something which always distinguishes him from the common herd, yet he appears in his latter performances to have lost his way. Instead of pursuing the study of that ideal beauty with which he had so successfully begun, he turned his mind to an injudicious quest of novelty; attempted what was not within the province of the Art, and endeavoured to overcome the hardness and obstinacy of his materials; which even supposing he had accomplished, so far as to make this species of drapery appear natural, the ill

effect and confusion occasioned by its being detached from the figure to which it belongs, ought to have been alone a sufficient reason to have deterred him from that practice.

We have not, I think, in our Academy, any of Bernini's works, except a cast of the head of his Neptune*; this will be sufficient to serve us for an example of the mischief produced by this attempt of representing the effects of the wind. The locks of the hair are flying abroad in all directions, insomuch that it is not a superficial view that can discover what the object is which is represented, or distinguish those flying locks from the features, as they are all of the same colour, of equal solidity, and consequently project with equal force.

The same entangled confusion which is here occasioned by the hair, is produced by

* Some years after this Discourse was written, Bernini's NEPTUNE was purchased for our author at Rome, and brought to England. After his death it was sold by his Executors for 500l. to Charles Anderson Pelham, Esq. now Lord Yarborough. M.

drapery flying off; which the eye must, for the same reason, inevitably mingle and confound with the principal parts of the figure.

It is a general rule, equally true in both Arts, that the form and attitude of the figure should be seen clearly, and without any ambiguity, at the first glance of the eye. This the Painter can easily do by colour, by losing parts in the ground, or keeping them so obscure as to prevent them from interfering with the more principal objects. The Sculptor has no other means of preventing this confusion than by attaching the drapery for the greater part close to the figure; the folds of which following the order of the limbs, whenever the drapery is seen, the eye is led to trace the form and attitude of the figure at the same time.

The drapery of the Apollo, though it makes a large mass, and is separated from the figure, does not affect the present question, from the very circumstance of its being so completely separated; and from the regularity and simplicity of its form, it does not in

the least interfere with a distinct view of the figure. In reality, it is no more a part of it than a pedestal, a trunk of a tree, or an animal, which we often see joined to statues.

The principal use of those appendages is to strengthen and preserve the statue from accidents; and many are of opinion, that the mantle which falls from the Apollo's arm is for the same end; but surely it answers a much greater purpose, by preventing that dryness of effect which would inevitably attend a naked arm, extended almost at full length to which we may add, the disagreeable effect which would proceed from the body and arm making a right angle.

The Apostles, in the church of St. John Lateran, appear to me to fall under the censure of an injudicious imitation of the manner of the painters. The drapery of those figures, from being disposed in large masses, gives undoubtedly that air of grandeur which magnitude or quantity is sure to produce. But though it should be acknowledged, that it is managed with great skill and intelligence,

and contrived to appear as light as the materials will allow, yet the weight and solidity of stone was not to be overcome.

Those figures are much in the style of Carlo Maratti, and such as we may imagine he would have made, if he had attempted Sculpture; and when we know he had the superintendance of that work, and was an intimate friend of one of the principal Sculptors, we may suspect that his taste had some influence, if he did not even give the designs. No man can look at those figures without recognizing the manner of Carlo Maratti. They have the same defect which his works so often have, of being overlaid with drapery, and that too artificially disposed. I cannot but believe, that if Ruscono, Le Gros, Monot, and the rest of the Sculptors employed in that work, had taken for their guide the simple dress, such as we see in the antique statues of the philosophers, it would have given more real grandeur to their figures, and would certainly have been more suitable to the characters of the Apostles.

Though there is no remedy for the ill effect of those solid projections which flying drapery in stone must always produce in statues, yet in bas-relievos it is totally different; those detached parts of drapery the Sculptor has here as much power over as the Painter, by uniting and losing it in the ground, so that it shall not in the least entangle and confuse the figure.

But here again the Sculptor, not content with this successful imitation, if it may be so called, proceeds to represent figures, or groups of figures on different plans; that is some on the fore ground, and some at a greater distance, in the manner of Painters in historical compositions. To do this he has no other means than by making the distant figures of less dimensions, and relieving them in a less degree from the surface; but this is not adequate to the end; they will still appear only as figures on a less scale, but equally near the eye with those in the front of the piece.

Nor does the mischief of this attempt,

which never accomplishes its intention, rest here: by this division of the work into many minute parts, the grandeur of its general effect is inevitably destroyed.

Perhaps the only circumstance in which the Modern have excelled the Ancient Sculptors, is the management of a single group in basso-relievo; the art of gradually raising the group from the flat surface, till it imperceptibly emerges into alto-relievo. Of this there is no ancient example remaining that discovers any approach to the skill which Le Gros has shown in an Altar in the Jesuits Church at Rome. Different plans or degrees of relief in the same group have, as we see in this instance, a good effect, though the contrary happens when the groups are separated, and are at some distance behind each other.

This improvement in the art of composing a group in basso-relievo was probably first suggested by the practice of the modern Painters, who relieve their figures, or groups of figures, from their ground, by the same

gentle gradation; and it is accomplished in every respect by the same general principles; but as the marble has no colour, it is the composition itself that must give it its light and shadow. The ancient Sculptors could not borrow this advantage from their Painters, for this was an art with which they appear to have been entirely unacquainted; and in the bas-relievos of Lorenzo Ghiberti, the casts of which we have in the Academy, this art is no more attempted than it was by the Painters of his age.

The next imaginary improvement of the moderns, is the representing the effects of Perspective in bas-relief. Of this little need be said; all must recollect how ineffectual has been the attempt of modern Sculptors to turn the buildings which they have introduced as seen from their angle, with a view to make them appear to recede from the eye in perspective. This, though it may show indeed their eager desire to encounter difficulties, shows at the same time how inadequate their materials are even to this their humble ambition.

The Ancients, with great judgement, represented only the elevation of whatever architecture they introduced into their bas-reliefs, which is composed of little more than horizontal or perpendicular lines; whereas the interruption of crossed lines or whatever causes a multiplicity of subordinate parts, destroys that regularity and firmness of effect on which grandeur of style so much depends.

We come now to the last consideration; in what manner Statues are to be dressed, which are made in honour of men, either now living, or lately departed.

This is a question which might employ a long discourse of itself: I shall at present only observe, that he who wishes not to obstruct the Artist, and prevent his exhibiting his abilities to their greatest advantage, will certainly not desire a modern dress.

The desire of transmitting to posterity the shape of modern dress must be acknowledged to be purchased at a prodigious price,

even the price of every thing that is valuable in art.

Working in stone is a very serious business; and it seems to be scarce worth while to employ such durable materials in conveying to posterity a fashion of which the longest existence scarce exceeds a year.

However agreeable it may be to the Antiquary's principles of equity and gratitude, that as he has received great pleasure from the contemplation of the fashions of dress of former ages, he wishes to give the same satisfaction to future Antiquaries: yet, methinks pictures of an inferior style, or prints, may be considered as quite sufficient, without prostituting this great art to such mean purposes.

In this town may be seen an Equestrian Statue in a modern dress, which may be sufficient to deter future artists from any such attempt: even supposing no other objection, the familiarity of the modern dress

by no means agrees with the dignity and gravity of Sculpture.

Sculpture is formal, regular, and austere; disdains all familiar objects, as incompatible with its dignity; and is an enemy to every species of affectation, or appearance of academical art. All contrast, therefore, of one figure to another, or of the limbs of a single figure, or even in the folds of the drapery, must be sparingly employed. In short, whatever partakes of fancy or caprice, or goes under the denomination of Picturesque, (however to be admired in its proper place,) is incompatible with that sobriety and gravity which is peculiarly the characteristick of this art.

There is no circumstance which more distinguishes a well-regulated and sound taste, than a settled uniformity of design, where all the parts are compact, and fitted to each other, every thing being of a piece. This principle extends itself to all habits of life, as well as to all works of art. Upon this general ground therefore we may safely

venture to pronounce, that the uniformity and simplicity of the materials on which the Sculptor labours, (which are only white marble,) prescribes bounds to his art, and teaches him to confine himself to a proportionable simplicity of design.

# DISCOURSE XI.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES.

DECEMBER 10, 1782.

# DISCOURSE XI.

GENIUS.—CONSISTS PRINCIPALLY IN THE COMPREHENSION OF A WHOLE; IN TAKING GENERAL IDEAS ONLY.

GENTLEMEN,

THE highest ambition of every Artist is to be thought a man of Genius. As long as this flattering quality is joined to his name, he can bear with patience the imputation of carelessness, incorrectness, or defects of whatever kind.

So far indeed is the presence of Genius from implying an absence of faults, that they are considered by many as its inseparable companions. Some go such lengths as to take indication from them, and not only excuse faults on account of Genius, but presume Genius from the existence of certain faults.

It is certainly true, that a work may justly

claim the character of Genius, though full of errors; and it is equally true, that it may be faultless, and yet not exhibit the least spark of Genius. This naturally suggests an inquiry, a desire at least of inquiring, what qualities of a work and of a workman may justly entitle a Painter to that character.

I have in a former discourse* endeavoured to impress you with a fixed opinion, that a comprehensive and critical knowledge of the works of nature is the only source of beauty and grandeur. But when we speak to Painters, we must always consider this rule, and all rules, with a reference to the mechanical practice of their own particular Art. It is not properly in the learning, the taste, and the dignity of the ideas, that Genius appears as belonging to a painter. There is a Genius particular and appropriated to his own trade, (as I may call it,) distinguished from all others. For that power, which enables the Artist to conceive his subject with dignity, may be said to belong to general education;

* Discourse III.

and is as much the Genius of a Poet, or the professor of any other liberal Art, or even a good critick in any of those arts, as of a Painter. Whatever sublime ideas may fill his mind, he is a Painter only as he can put in practice what he knows, and communicate those ideas by visible representation.

If my expression can convey my idea, I wish to distinguish excellence of this kind by calling it the Genius of mechanical performance. This Genius consists, I conceive, in the power of expressing that which employs your pencil, whatever it may be, *as a whole*; so that the general effect and power of the whole may take possession of the mind, and for a while suspend the consideration of the subordinate and particular beauties or defects.

The advantage of this method of considering objects, is what I wish now more particularly to enforce. At the same time I do not forget, that a Painter must have the power of contracting as well as dilating his sight; because, he that does not at all express particulars, expresses nothing; yet it is cer-

tain, that a nice discrimination of minute circumstances, and a punctilious delineation of them, whatever excellence it may have, (and I do not mean to detract from it,) never did confer on the Artist the character of Genius.

Beside those minute differences in things which are frequently not observed at all, and when they are, make little impression, there are in all considerable objects great characteristick distinctions, which press strongly on the senses, and therefore fix the imagination. These are by no means, as some persons think, an aggregate of all the small discriminating particulars: nor will such an accumulation of particulars ever express them. These answer to what I have heard great lawyers call the leading points in a case, or the leading cases relative to those points.

The detail of particulars, which does not assist the expression of the main characteristick, is worse than useless, it is mischievous, as it dissipates the attention, and draws it from the principal point. It may be remarked,

that the impression which is left on our mind even of things which are familiar to us, is seldom more than their general effect; beyond which we do not look in recognising such objects. To express this in Painting, is to express what is congenial and natural to the mind of man, and what gives him by reflection his own mode of conceiving. The other pre-supposes *nicety* and *research*, which are only the business of the curious and attentive, and therefore does not speak to the general sense of the whole species; in which common, and, as I may so call it, mother tongue, every thing grand and comprehensive must be uttered.

I do not mean to prescribe what degree of attention ought to be paid to the minute parts; this it is hard to settle. We are sure that it is expressing the general effect of the whole, which alone can give to objects their true and touching character; and wherever this is observed, whatever else may be neglected, we acknowledge the hand of a Master. We may even go further, and observe, that when the general effect only is presented to us by

a skilful hand, it appears to express the object represented in a more lively manner than the minutest resemblance would do.

These observations may lead to very deep questions, which I do not mean here to discuss; among others, it may lead to an inquiry, Why we are not always pleased with the most absolute possible resemblance of an imitation to its original object. Cases may exist in which such a resemblance may be even disagreeable. I shall only observe that the effect of figures in Wax-work, though certainly a more exact representation than can be given by Painting or Sculpture, is a sufficient proof that the pleasure we receive from imitation is not increased merely in proportion as it approaches to minute and detailed reality; we are pleased, on the contrary, by seeing ends accomplished by seemingly inadequate means.

To express protuberance by actual relief, to express the softness of flesh by the softness of wax, seems rude and inartificial, and creates no grateful surprise. But to express

distances on a plain surface, softness by hard bodies, and particular colouring by materials which are not singly of that colour, produces that magic which is the prize and triumph of art.

Carry this principle a step further. Suppose the effect of imitation to be fully compassed by means still more inadequate; let the power of a few well-chosen strokes, which supersede labour by judgement and direction, produce a complete impression of all that the mind demands in an object; we are charmed with such an unexpected happiness of execution, and begin to be tired with the superfluous diligence, which in vain solicits an appetite already satiated.

The properties of all objects, as far as a Painter is concerned with them, are, the outline or drawing, the colour, and the light and shade. The drawing gives the form, the colour its visible quality, and the light and shade its solidity.

Excellence in any one of these parts of art

will never be acquired by an artist, unless he has the habit of looking upon objects at large, and observing the effect which they have on the eye when it is dilated, and employed upon the whole, without seeing any one of the parts distinctly. It is by this that we obtain the ruling characteristick, and that we learn to imitate it by short and dextrous methods. I do not mean by dexterity a trick or mechanical habit, formed by guess, and established by custom; but that science, which, by a profound knowledge of ends and means, discovers the shortest and surest way to its own purpose.

If we examine with a critical view the manner of those painters whom we consider as patterns, we shall find that their great fame does not proceed from their works being more highly finished than those of other artists, or from a more minute attention to details, but from that enlarged comprehension which sees the whole object at once, and that energy of art which gives its characteristick effect by adequate expression.

Raffaelle and Titian are two names which stand the highest in our art; one for Drawing, the other for Painting. The most considerable and the most esteemed works of Raffaelle are the Cartoons, and his Fresco works in the Vatican; those, as we all know, are far from being minutely finished: his principal care and attention seems to have been fixed upon the adjustment of the whole, whether it was the general composition, or the composition of each individual figure; for every figure may be said to be a lesser whole, though in regard to the general work to which it belongs, it is but a part; the same may be said of the head, of the hands, and feet. Though he possessed this art of seeing and comprehending the whole, as far as form is concerned, he did not exert the same faculty in regard to the general effect, which is presented to the eye by colour, and light and shade. Of this the deficiency of his oil pictures, where this excellence is more expected than in Fresco, is a sufficient proof.

It is to Titian we must turn our eyes to

find excellence with regard to colour, and light and shade, in the highest degree. He was both the first and the greatest master of this art. By a few strokes he knew how to mark the general image and character of whatever object he attempted; and produced, by this alone, a truer representation than his master Giovanni Bellino, or any of his predecessors, who finished every hair. His great care was to express the general colour, to preserve the masses of light and shade, and to give by opposition the idea of that solidity which is inseparable from natural objects. When those are preserved, though the work should possess no other merit, it will have in a proper place its complete effect; but where any of these are wanting, however minutely laboured the picture may be in the detail, the whole will have a false and even an unfinished appearance, at whatever distance, or in whatever light, it can be shown.

It is vain to attend to the variation of tints, if, in that attention, the general hue of flesh is lost; or to finish ever so minutely the parts,

if the masses are not observed, or the whole not well put together.

Vasari seems to have had no great disposition to favour the Venetian Painters, yet he every where justly commends *il modo di fare, la maniera, la bella pratica;* that is, the admirable manner and practice of that school. On Titian, in particular, he bestows the epithets of *giudicioso, bello, e stupendo.*

This manner was then new to the world, but that unshaken truth on which it is founded, has fixed it as a model to all succeeding Painters: and those who will examine into the artifice, will find it to consist in the power of generalising, and in the shortness and simplicity of the means employed.

Many artists, as Vasari likewise observes, have ignorantly imagined they are imitating the manner of Titian, when they leave their colours rough, and neglect the detail; but, not possessing the principles on which he wrought, they have produced what he calls *goffe pitture*, absurd foolish pictures;

for such will always be the consequence of affecting dexterity without science, without selection, and without fixed principles.

Raffaelle and Titian seem to have looked at nature for different purposes; they both had the power of extending their view to the whole; but one looked only for the general effect as produced by form, the other as produced by colour.

We cannot entirely refuse to Titian the merit of attending to the general *form* of his object, as well as colour; but his deficiency lay, a deficiency at least when he is compared with Raffaelle, in not possessing the power like him, of correcting the form of his model by any general idea of beauty in his own mind. Of this his St. Sebastian is a particular instance. This figure appears to be a most exact representation both of the form and the colour of the model, which he then happened to have before him; it has all the force of nature, and the colouring is flesh itself; but, unluckily, the model was of a bad form, especially the legs. Titian

has with as much care preserved these defects, as he has imitated the beauty and brilliancy of the colouring. In his colouring he was large and general, as in his design he was minute and partial: in the one he was a Genius, in the other not much above a copier. I do not, however, speak now of all his pictures: instances enough may be produced in his works, where those observations on his defects could not with any propriety be applied: but it is in the manner or language, as it may be called, in which Titian and others of that school express themselves, that their chief excellence lies. This manner is in reality, in painting, what language is in poetry; we are all sensible how differently the imagination is affected by the same sentiment expressed in different words, and how mean or how grand the same object appears when presented to us by different Painters. Whether it is the human figure, an animal, or even inanimate objects, there is nothing, however unpromising in appearance, but may be raised into dignity, convey sentiment, and produce emotion, in the hands of a Painter of genius. What

was said of Virgil, that he threw even the dung about the ground with an air of dignity, may be applied to Titian: whatever he touched, however naturally mean, and habitually familiar, by a kind of magick he invested with grandeur and importance.

I must here observe, that I am not recommending a neglect of the detail; indeed it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prescribe *certain* bounds, and tell how far, or when it is to be observed or neglected; much must, at last, be left to the taste and judgment of the artist. I am well aware that a judicious detail will sometimes give the force of truth to the work, and consequently interest the spectator. I only wish to impress on your minds the true distinction between essential and subordinate powers; and to show what qualities in the art claim your *chief* attention, and what may, with the least injury to your reputation, be neglected. Something, perhaps, always must be neglected; the lesser ought then to give way to the greater; and since every work can have but a limited time allotted to it, (for even

supposing a whole life to be employed about one picture, it is still limited,) it appears more reasonable to employ that time to the best advantage, in contriving various methods of composing the work,—in trying different effect of light and shadow,—and employing the labour of correction in heightening by a judicious adjustment of the parts the effects of the whole,—than that the time should be taken up in minutely finishing those parts.

But there is another kind of high finishing, which may safely be condemned, as it seems to counteract its own purpose; that is, when the artist, to avoid that hardness which proceeds from the outline cutting against the ground, softens and blends the colours to excess: this is what the ignorant call high finishing, but which tends to destroy the brilliancy of colour, and the true effect of representation; which consists very much in preserving the same proportion of sharpness and bluntness that is found in natural objects. This extreme softening, instead of producing the effect of softness, gives the

appearance of ivory, or some other hard substance, highly polished.

The portraits of Cornelius Jansen appear to have this defect, and consequently want that suppleness which is the characteristick of flesh; whereas, in the works of Vandyck we find that true mixture of softness and hardness perfectly observed. The same defect may be found in the manner of Vanderwerf, in opposition to that of Teniers; and such also, we may add, is the manner of Raffaelle in his oil pictures, in comparison with that of Titian.

The name which Raffaelle has so justly maintained as the first of Painters, we may venture to say was not acquired by this laborious attention. His apology may be made by saying that it was the manner of his country; but if he had expressed his ideas with the facility and eloquence, as it may be called, of Titian, his works would certainly not have been less excellent; and that praise, which ages and nations have poured out upon him, for possessing Genius

in the higher attainments of art, would have been extended to them all.

Those who are not conversant in works of art, are often surprised at the high value set by connoisseurs on drawings which appear careless, and in every respect unfinished; but they are truly valuable; and their value arises from this, that they give the idea of an whole; and this whole is often expressed by a dexterous facility which indicates the true power of a Painter, even though roughly exerted: whether it consists in the general composition, or the general form of each figure, or the turn of the attitude which bestows grace and elegance. All this we may see fully exemplified in the very skilful drawings of Parmegiano and Correggio. On whatever account we value these drawings, it is certainly not for high finishing, or a minute attention to particulars.

Excellence in every part, and in every province of our art, from the highest style of history down to the resemblances of still-life, will depend on this power of extending

the attention at once to the whole, without which the greatest diligence is vain.

I wish you to bear in mind, that when I speak of an whole, I do not mean simply an *whole* as belonging to composition, but an *whole* with respect to the general style of colouring; an *whole* with regard to the light and shade; an *whole* of every thing which may separately become the main object of a Painter.

I remember a Landscape-painter in Rome, who was known by the name of STUDIO, from his patience in high finishing, in which he thought the whole excellence of art consisted; so that he once endeavoured, as he said, to represent every individual leaf on a tree. This picture I never saw; but I am very sure that an artist, who looked only at the general character of the species, the order of the branches, and the masses of the foliage, would in a few minutes produce a more true resemblance of trees, than this Painter in as many months.

A Landscape-painter certainly ought to study anatomically (if I may use the expression) all the objects which he paints; but when he is to turn his studies to use, his skill, as a man of genius, will be displayed in showing the general effect, preserving the same degree of hardness and softness which the objects have in nature; for he applies himself to the imagination, not to the curiosity, and works not for the Virtuoso or the Naturalist, but for the common observer of life and nature. When he knows his subject, he will know not only what to describe, but what to omit: and this skill in leaving out, is, in all things, a great part of knowledge and wisdom.

The same excellence of manner which Titian displayed in History or Portrait-painting, is equally conspicuous in his Landscapes, whether they are professedly such, or serve only as back-grounds. One of the most eminent of this latter kind is to be found in the picture of St. Pietro Martire. The large trees, which are here introduced, are plainly distinguished from each other by the different

manner with which the branches shoot from their trunks, as well as by their different foliage; and the weeds in the fore-ground are varied in the same manner, just as much as variety requires, and no more. When Algarotti, speaking of this picture, praises it for the minute discriminations of the leaves and plants, even, as he says, to excite the admiration of a Botanist, his intention was undoubtedly to give praise even at the expence of truth; for he must have known, that this is not the character of the picture; but connoisseurs will always find in pictures what they think they ought to find: he was not aware that he was giving a description injurious to the reputation of Titian.

Such accounts may be very hurtful to young artists, who never have had an opportunity of seeing the work described; and they may possibly conclude, that this great Artist acquired the name of the Divine Titian from his eminent attention to such trifling circumstances, which in reality, would not raise him above the level of the most ordinary painter.

We may extend these observations even to what seems to have but a single, and that an individual object. The excellence of Portrait-Painting, and we may add, even the likeness, the character, and countenance, as I have observed in another place, depend more upon the general effect produced by the painter, than on the exact expression of the peculiarities, or minute discrimination of the parts. The chief attention of the artist is therefore employed in planting the features in their proper places, which so much contributes to giving the effect and true impression of the whole. The very peculiarities may be reduced to classes and general descriptions; and there are therefore large ideas to be found even in this contracted subject. He may afterwards labour single features to what degree he thinks proper, but let him not forget continually to examine, whether in finishing the parts he is not destroying the general effect.

It is certainly a thing to be wished, that all excellence were applied to illustrate subjects that are interesting and worthy of being

commemorated; whereas, of half the pictures that are in the world, the subject can be valued only as an occasion which set the artist to work: and yet, our high estimation of such pictures, without considering or perhaps without knowing the subject, shows how much our attention is engaged by the art alone.

Perhaps nothing that we can say will so clearly show the advantage and excellence of this faculty, as that it confers the character of Genius on works that pretend to no other merit; in which is neither expression, character, or dignity, and were none are interested in the subject. We cannot refuse the character of Genius to the marriage of Paolo Veronese, without opposing the general sense of mankind, (great authorities have called it the triumph of Painting,) or, to the altar of St. Augustine at Antwerp, by Rubens, which equally deserves that title, and for the same reason. Neither of those pictures have any interesting story to support them. That of Paolo Veronese is only a representation of a great concourse of people

at a dinner; and the subject of Rubens, if it may be called a subject where nothing is doing, is an assembly of various Saints that lived in different ages. The whole excellence of those pictures consists in mechanical dexterity, working however under the influence of that comprehensive faculty which I have so often mentioned.

It is by this, and this alone, that the mechanical power is ennobled, and raised much above its natural rank. And it appears to me, that with propriety it acquires this character, as an instance of that superiority with which mind predominates over matter, by contracting into one whole what nature has made multifarious.

The great advantage of this idea of a whole is, that a greater quantity of truth may be said to be contained and expressed in a few lines or touches, than in the most laborious finishing of the parts, where this is not regarded. It is upon this foundation that it stands; and the justness of the observation would be confirmed by the ignorant in art,

if it were possible to take their opinions unseduced by some false notion of what they imagine they ought to see in a Picture. As it is an art, they think they ought to be pleased in proportion as they see that art ostentatiously displayed; they will, from this supposition, prefer neatness, high-finishing, and gaudy colouring, to the truth, simplicity, and unity of nature. Perhaps too, the totally ignorant beholder, like the ignorant artist, cannot comprehend a whole, nor even what it means. But if false notions do not anticipate their perceptions, they who are capable of observation, and who, pretending to no skill, look only straight forward, will praise and condemn in proportion as the painter has succeeded in the effect of the whole. Here, general satisfaction, or general dislike, though perhaps despised by the Painter, as proceeding from the ignorance of the principles of art, may yet help to regulate his conduct, and bring back his attention to that which ought to be his principal object, and from which he has deviated for the sake of minuter beauties.

An instance of this right judgement I once saw in a child, in going through a gallery where there were many portraits of the last ages, which, though neatly put out of hand, were very ill put together. The child paid no attention to the neat finishing or naturalness of any bit of drapery, but appeared to observe only the ungracefulness of the persons represented, and put herself in the posture of every figure which she saw in a forced and awkward attitude. The censure of nature, uninformed, fastened upon the greatest fault that could be in a picture, because it related to the character and management of the whole.

I should be sorry, if what has been said should be understood to have any tendency to encourage that carelessness which leaves work in an unfinished state. I commend nothing for the want of exactness; I mean to point out that kind of exactness which is the best, and which is alone truly to be so esteemed.

So far is my disquisition from giving

countenance to idleness, that there is nothing in our art which enforces such continual exertion and circumspection, as an attention to the general effect of the whole. It requires much study and much practice; it requires the Painter's entire mind; whereas the parts may be finishing by nice touches, while his mind is engaged on other matters; he may even hear a play or a novel read without much disturbance. The artist who flatters his own indolence, will continually find himself evading this active exertion, and applying his thoughts to the ease and laziness of highly finishing the parts; producing at last what Cowley calls "laborious effects of idleness."

No work can be too much finished, provided the diligence employed be directed to its proper object; but I have observed that an excessive labour in the detail has, nine times in ten, been pernicious to the general effect, even when it has been the labour of great masters. It indicates a bad choice, which is an ill setting out in any undertaking.

To give a right direction to your industry

has been my principal purpose in this discourse. It is this, which I am confident often makes the difference between two Students of equal capacities, and of equal industry. While the one is employing his labour on minute objects of little consequence, the other is acquiring the art, and perfecting the habit, of seeing nature in an extensive view, in its proper proportions, and its due subordination of parts.

Before I conclude, I must make one observation sufficiently connected with the present subject.

The same extension of mind which gives the excellence of Genius to the theory and mechanical practice of the art, will direct him likewise in the method of study, and give him the superiority over those who narrowly follow a more confined track of partial imitation. Whoever, in order to finish his education, should travel to Italy, and spend his whole time there only in copying pictures, and measuring statues or buildings, (though these things are not to be

neglected,) would return with little improvement. He that imitates the Iliad, says Dr. Young, is not imitating Homer. It is not by laying up in the memory the particular details of any of the great works of art, that any man becomes a great artist, if he stops without making himself master of the general principles on which these works are conducted. If he even hopes to rival those whom he admires, he must consider their works as the means of teaching him the true art of seeing nature. When this is acquired, he then may be said to have appropriated their powers, or at least the foundation of their powers, to himself; the rest must depend upon his own industry and application. The great business of study is, to form a *mind*, adapted and adequate to all times and all occasions; to which all nature is then laid open, and which may be said to possess the key of her inexhaustible riches.

# DISCOURSE XII.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES.

DECEMBER 10, 1784.

# DISCOURSE XII.

PARTICULAR METHODS OF STUDY OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE.—LITTLE OF THE ART CAN BE TAUGHT.—LOVE OF METHOD OFTEN A LOVE OF IDLENESS. PITTORI IMPROVVISATORI APT TO BE CARELESS AND INCORRECT; SELDOM ORIGINAL AND STRIKING. THIS PROCEEDS FROM THEIR NOT STUDYING THE WORKS OF OTHER MASTERS.

GENTLEMEN,

IN consequence of the situation in which I have the honour to be placed in this Academy, it has often happened, that I have been consulted by the young Students who intend to spend some years in Italy, concerning the method of regulating their studies. I am, as I ought to be, solicitously desirous to communicate the entire result of my experience and observation; and though my openness and facility in giving my opinions might make some amends for whatever was defective in them, yet I fear my answers have not

often given satisfaction. Indeed I have never been sure, that I understood perfectly what they meant, and was not without some suspicion that they had not themselves very distinct ideas of the object of their inquiry.

If the information required was, by what means the path that leads to excellence could be discovered; if they wished to know whom they were to take for their guides; what to adhere to, and what to avoid; where they were to bait, and where they were to take up their rest; what was to be tasted only, and what should be their diet; such general directions are certainly proper for a Student to ask, and for me, to the best of my capacity, to give; but these rules have been already given: they have in reality been the subject of almost all my Discourses from this place. But I am rather inclined to think, that by *method of study*, it was meant, (as several do mean,) that the times and the seasons should be prescribed, and the order settled, in which every thing was to be done: that it might be useful to point out to what degree of excellence one part of the

Art was to be carried, before the Student proceeded to the next; how long he was to continue to draw from the ancient statues, when to begin to compose, and when to apply to the study of colouring.

Such a detail of instruction might be extended with a great deal of plausible and ostentatious amplification. But it would at best be useless. Our studies will be for ever, in a very great degree, under the direction of chance; like travellers, we must take what we can get, and when we can get it; whether it is, or is not administered to us in the most commodious manner, in the most proper place, or at the exact minute when we would wish to have it.

Treatises on education, and method of study, have always appeared to me to have one general fault. They proceed upon a false supposition of life; as if we possessed not only a power over events and circumstances, but had a greater power over ourselves than I believe any of us will be found to possess. Instead of supposing ourselves to be perfect

patterns of wisdom and virtue, it seems to me more reasonable to treat ourselves (as I am sure we must now and then treat others) like humoursome children, whose fancies are often to be indulged, in order to keep them in good-humour with themselves and their pursuits. It is necessary to use some artifice of this kind in all processes which by their very nature are long, tedious, and complex, in order to prevent our taking that aversion to our studies, which the continual shackles of methodical restraint are sure to produce.

I would rather wish a student, as soon as he goes abroad, to employ himself upon whatever he has been incited to by any immediate impulse, than to go sluggishly about a prescribed task, whatever he does in such a state of mind, little advantage accrues from it, as nothing sinks deep enough to leave any lasting impression; and it is impossible that any thing should be well understood, or well done, that is taken into a reluctant understanding, and executed with a servile hand.

It is desirable, and indeed is necessary to intellectual health, that the mind should be recreated and refreshed with a variety in our studies; that in the irksomeness of uniform pursuit we should be relieved, and, if I may so say, deceived, as much as possible. Besides; the minds of men are so very differently constituted, that it is impossible to find one method which shall be suitable to all. It is of no use to prescribe to those who have no talents; and those who have talents will find methods for themselves---methods dictated to them by their own particular dispositions, and by the experience of their own particular necessities.

However, I would not be understood to extend this doctrine to the younger students. The first part of the life of a student, like that of other school-boys, must necessarily be a life of restraint. The grammar, the rudiments, however unpalatable, must at all events be mastered. After a habit is acquired of drawing correctly from the model (whatever it may be) which he has before

him, the rest, I think, may be safely left to chance; always supposing that the student is *employed*, and that his studies are directed to the proper object.

A passion for his art, and an eager desire to excel, will more than supply the place of method. By leaving a student to himself, he may possibly indeed be led to undertake matters above his strength: but the trial will at least have this advantage, it will discover to himself his own deficiencies; and this discovery alone, is a very considerable acquisition. One inconvenience, I acknowledge, may attend bold and arduous attempts; frequent failure may discourage. This evil, however, is not more pernicious than the slow proficiency which is the natural consequence of too easy tasks.

Whatever advantages method may have in dispatch of business, (and there it certainly has many,) I have but little confidence of its efficacy in acquiring excellence in any art whatever. Indeed, I have always strongly suspected, that this love of method,

on which some persons appear to place so great dependance, is, in reality, at the bottom, a love of idleness; a want of sufficient energy to put themselves into immediate action: it is a sort of an apology to themselves for doing nothing. I have known artists who may truly be said to have spent their whole lives, or at least the most precious part of their lives, in planning methods of study, without ever beginning; resolving, however, to put it all in practice at some time or other, —when a certain period arrives,—when proper conveniences are procured,—or when they remove to a certain place better calculated for study. It is not uncommon for such persons to go abroad with the most honest and sincere resolution of studying hard, when they shall arrive at the end of their journey. The same want of exertion, arising from the same cause which made them at home put off the day of labour until they had found a proper scheme for it, still continues in Italy, and they consequently return home with little, if any improvement.

In the practice of art, as well as in morals, it is necessary to keep a watchful and jealous eye over ourselves; idleness, assuming the specious disguise of industry, will lull to sleep all suspicion of our want of an active exertion of strength. A provision of endless apparatus, a bustle of infinite inquiry and research, or even the mere mechanical labour of copying, may be employed, to evade and shuffile off real labour,—the real labour of thinking.

I have declined for these reasons to point out any particular method and course of study to young Artists on their arrival in Italy. I have left it to their own prudence, a prudence which will grow and improve upon them in the course of unremitted, ardent industry, directed by a real love of their profession, and an unfeigned admiration of those who have been universally admitted as patterns of excellence in the art.

In the exercise of that general prudence, I shall here submit to their consideration such miscellaneous observations as have occurred

to me on considering the mistaken notions or evil habits, which have prevented that progress towards excellence, which the natural abilities of several Artists might otherwise have enabled them to make.

False opinions and vicious habits have done far more mischief to students, and to Professors too, than any wrong methods of study.

Under the influence of sloth, or of some mistaken notion, is that disposition which always wants to lean on other men. Such Students are always talking of the prodigious progress they should make, if they could but have the advantage of being taught by some particular eminent Master. To him they would wish to transfer that care, which they ought and must take of themselves. Such are to be told, that after the rudiments are past, very little of our Art can be taught by others. The most skilful Master can do little more than put the end of the clue into the hands of his Scholar, by which he must conduct himself.

It is true, the beauties and defects of the works of our predecessors may be pointed out; the principles on which their works are conducted, may be explained; the great examples of Ancient Art may be spread out before them; but the most sumptuous entertainment is prepared in vain, if the guests will not take the trouble of helping themselves.

Even the Academy itself, where every convenience for study is procured, and laid before them, may, from that very circumstance, from leaving no difficulties to be encountered in the pursuit, cause a remission of their industry. It is not uncommon to see young artists whilst they are struggling with every obstacle in their way, exert themselves with such success as to outstrip competitors possessed of every means of improvement. The promising expectation which was formed, on so much being done with so little means, has recommended them to a Patron, who has supplied them with every convenience of study; from that time their industry and eagerness of pursuit has forsaken them; they

stand still, and see others rush on before them.

Such men are like certain animals, who will feed only when there is but little provender, and that got at with difficulty through the bars of a rack, but refuse to touch it when there is an abundance before them.

Perhaps, such a falling off may proceed from the faculties being overpowered by the immensity of the materials; as the traveller despairs ever to arrive at the end of his journey, when the whole extent of the road which he is to pass is at once displayed to his view,

Among the first moral qualities therefore, which a Student ought to cultivate, is a just and manly confidence in himself, or rather in the effects of that persevering industry when he is resolved to possess.

When Raffaelle, by means of his connection with Bramante, the Pope's Architect, was fixed upon to adorn the Vatican with his

works, he had done nothing that marked in him any great superiority over his contemporaries; though he was then but young, he had under his direction the most considerable Artists of his age; and we know what kind of men those were: a lesser mind would have sunk under such a weight; and if we should judge from the meek and gentle disposition which we are told was the character of Raffaelle, we might expect this would have happened to him; but his strength appeared to increase in proportion as exertion was required; and it is not improbable that we are indebted to the good fortune which first placed him in that conspicuous situation, for those great examples of excellence which he has left us.

The observations to which I formerly wished, and now desire, to point your attention, relate not to errors which are committed by those who have no claim to merit, but to those inadvertencies into which men of parts only can fall by the over-rating or the abuse of some real, though perhaps subordinate, excellence. The errors

last alluded to are those of backward, timid characters; what I shall now speak of, belong to another class; to those Artists who are distinguished for the readiness and facility of their invention. It is undoubtedly a splendid and desirable accomplishment to be able to design instantaneously any given subject. It is an excellence that I believe every Artist would wish to possess; but unluckily, the manner in which this dexterity is acquired, habituates the mind to be contented with first thoughts without choice or selection. The judgement, after it has been long passive, by degrees loses its power of becoming active when exertion is necessary.

Whoever, therefore, has this talent, must in some measure undo what he has had the habit of doing, or at least give a new turn to his mind: great works, which are to live and stand the criticism of posterity, are not performed at a heat. A proportionable time is required for deliberation and circumspection. I remember when I was at Rome looking at the fighting Gladiator, in

company with an eminent Sculptor, and I expressed my admiration of the skill with which the whole is composed, and the minute attention of the Artist to the change of every muscle in that momentary exertion of strength, he was of opinion that a work so perfect required nearly the whole life of man to perform.

I believe, if we look around us, we shall find, that in the sister art of Poetry, what has been soon done, has been as soon forgotten. The judgement and practice of a great Poet on this occasion is worthy attention. Metastasio, who has so much and justly distinguished himself throughout Europe, at his outset was an *Improvvisatore*, or extempore Poet, a description of men not uncommon in Italy: it is not long since he was asked by a friend, if he did not think the custom of inventing and reciting *extempore*, which he practised when a boy in his character of an *Improvvisatore*, might not be considered as a happy beginning of his education; he thought it, on the contrary, a disadvantage to him: he said that he had

acquired by that habit a carelessness and incorrectness, which it cost him much trouble to overcome, and to substitute in the place of it a totally different habit, that of thinking with selection, and of expressing himself with correctness and precision.

However extraordinary it may appear, it is certainly true, that the inventions of the *Pittori improvvisatori*, as they may be called, have,—notwithstanding the common boast of their authors that all is spun from their own brain,—very rarely any thing that has in the least the air of originality:—their compositions are generally common-place, uninteresting, without character or expression; like those flowery speeches that we sometimes hear, which impress no new ideas on the mind.

I would not be thought, however, by what has been said, to oppose the use, the advantage, the necessity there is, of a Painter's being readily able to express his ideas by sketching. The further he can carry such designs, the better. The evil to

be apprehended is, his resting there, and not correcting them afterwards from nature, or taking the trouble to look about him for whatever assistance the works of others will afford him.

We are not to suppose, that when a Painter sits down to deliberate on any work, he has all his knowledge to seek; he must not only be able to draw *extempore* the human figure in every variety of action, but he must be acquainted likewise with the general principles of composition, and possess a habit of foreseeing, while he is composing, the effect of the masses of light and shadow, that will attend such a disposition. His mind is entirely occupied by his attention to the whole. It is a subsequent consideration to determine the attitude and expression of individual figures. It is in this period of his work that I would recommend to every artist to look over his port-folio, or pocket-book, in which he has treasured up all the happy inventions, all the extraordinary and expressive attitudes that he has met with in the course of his studies; not only for

the sake of borrowing from those studies whatever may be applicable to his own work, but likewise on account of the great advantage he will receive by bringing the ideas of great Artists more distinctly before his mind, which will teach him to invent other figures in a similar style.

Sir Francis Bacon speaks with approbation of the provisionary methods Demosthenes and Cicero employed to assist their invention: and illustrates their use by a quaint comparison after his manner. These particular *Studios* being not immediately connected with our art, I need not cite the passage I allude to, and shall only observe that such preparation totally opposes the general received opinions that are floating in the world, concerning genius and inspiration. The same great man in another place, speaking of his own essays, remarks, that they treat of "those things, wherein "both men's lives and persons are most "conversant, whereof a man shall find "much in experience, but little in books:" they are then what an artist would naturally

call invention; and yet we may suspect that even the genius of Bacon, great as it was, would never have been enabled to have made those observations, if his mind had not been trained and disciplined by reading the observations of others. Nor could he without such reading have known that those opinions were not to be found in other books.

I know there are many Artists of great fame, who appear never to have looked out of themselves, and who probably would think it derogatory to their character, to be supposed to borrow from any other Painter. But when we recollect, and compare the works of such men with those who took to their assistance the inventions of others, we shall be convinced of the great advantage of this latter practice,

The two men most eminent for readiness of invention, that occur to me, are Luca Giordano and La Fage; one in painting, and the other in drawing.

To such extraordinary powers as were

possessed by both of those Artists, we cannot refuse the character of Genius; at the same time, it must be acknowledged, that it was that kind of mechanick Genius which operates without much assistance of the head. In all their works, which are (as might be expected) very numerous, we may look in vain for any thing that can be said to be original and striking; and yet, according to the ordinary ideas of originality, they have as good pretensions as most Painters; for they borrowed very little from others, and still less will any Artist, that can distinguish between excellence and insipidity, ever borrow from them.

To those men, and all such, let us oppose the practice of the first of Painters. I suppose we shall all agree, that no man ever possessed a greater power of invention, and stood less in need of foreign assistance, than Raffaelle; and yet, when he was designing one of his greatest as well as latest works, the Cartoons, it is very apparent that he had the studies which he had made from Masaccio before him.

Two noble figures of St. Paul, which he found there, he adopted in his own work: one of them he took for St. Paul, preaching at Athens; and the other for the same Saint, when chastising the sorcerer Elymas. Another figure in the same work, whose head is sunk in his breast, with his eyes shut, appearing deeply wrapt up in thought, was introduced amongst the listeners to the preaching of St. Paul. The most material alteration that is made in those two figures of St. Paul, is the addition of the left hands, which are not seen in the original. It is a rule that Raffaelle observed, (and indeed ought never to be dispensed with,) in a principal figure, to show both hands; that it should never be a question, what is become of the other hand. For the Sacrifice at Listra, he took the whole ceremony much as it stands in an ancient Basso-relievo, since published in the ADMIRANDA.

I have given examples from those pictures only of Raffaelle which we have among us, though many other instances might be produced of this great Painter's not dis-

daining assistance: indeed his known wealth was so great, that he might borrow where he pleased without loss of credit.

It may be remarked, that this work of Masaccio, from which he has borrowed so freely, was a publick work, and at no farther distance from Rome, than Florence; so that if he had considered it a disgraceful theft, he was sure to be detected; but he was well satisfied that his character for Invention would be little affected by such a discovery; nor is it, except in the opinion of those who are ignorant of the manner in which great works are built.

Those who steal from mere poverty; who, having nothing of their own, cannot exist a minute without making such depredations; who are so poor that they have no place in which they can even deposit what they have taken; to men of this description nothing can be said: but such Artists as those to whom I suppose myself now speaking, men whom I consider as competently provided with all the necessaries and conveniences of

art, and who do not desire to steal baubles and common trash, but wish only to possess peculiar rarities which they select to ornament their cabinets, and take care to enrich the general store with materials of equal or of greater value than what they have taken; such men surely need not be ashamed of that friendly intercourse which ought to exist among Artists, of receiving from the dead and giving to the living, and perhaps to those who are yet unborn.

The daily food and nourishment of the mind of an Artist is found in the great works of his predecessors. There is no other way for him to become great himself. *Serpens, nisi serpentem comederit, non fit draco**, is a remark of a whimsical Natural History, which I have read, though I do not recollect its title; however false as to dragons, it is applicable enough to Artists.

* In Ben Johnson's CATILINE we find this aphorism, with a slight variation:

" A serpent, ere he comes to be a dragon,
" Must eat a bat." M.

Raffaelle, as appears from what has been said, had carefully studied the works of Masaccio; and indeed there was no other, if we except Michael Angelo, (whom he likewise imitated,) so worthy of his attention; and though his manner was dry and hard, his compositions formal, and not enough diversified, according to the custom of Painters in that early period, yet his works possess that grandeur and simplicity which accompany, and even sometimes proceed from, regularity and hardness of manner. We must consider the barbarous state of the Arts before his time, when skill in drawing was so little understood, that the best of the painters could not even foreshorten the foot, but every figure appeared to stand upon his toes; and what served for drapery, had from the hardness and smallness of the folds, too much the appearance of cords clinging round the body. He first introduced large drapery, flowing in an easy and natural manner: indeed he appears to be the first who discovered the path that leads to every excellence to which the Art afterwards arrived, and may therefore be justly con-

sidered as one of the Great Fathers of modern Art.

Though I have been led on to a longer digression respecting this great Painter than I intended, yet I cannot avoid mentioning another excellence which he possessed in a very eminent degree; he was as much distinguished among his contemporaries for his diligence and industry, as he was for the natural faculties of his mind. We are told, that his whole attention was absorbed in the pursuit of his art, and that he acquired the name of Masaccio*, from his total disregard to his dress, his person, and all the common concerns of life. He is indeed a signal instance of what well-directed diligence will do in a short time; he lived but twenty-seven years; yet in that short space carried the art so far beyond what it had before reached, that he appears to stand alone as a model for his successors. Vasari gives a long catalogue of Painters and Sculptors, who formed their taste, and learned their

* The addition of *accio* denotes some deformity or imperfection attending that person to whom it is applied. R.

Art, by studying his works; among those, he names Michael Angelo, Lionardo da Vinci, Pietro Perugino, Raffaelle, Bartolomeo, Andrea del Sarto, Il Rosso, and Pierino del Vaga.

The habit of contemplating and brooding over the ideas of great geniuses, till you find yourself warmed by the contact, is the true method of forming an artist-like mind; it is impossible, in the presence of those great men, to think, or invent in a mean manner; a state of mind is acquired that receives those ideas only which relish of grandeur and simplicity.

Beside the general advantage of forming the taste by such an intercourse, there is another of a particular kind, which was suggested to me by the practice of Raffaelle, when imitating the work of which I have been speaking. The figure of the Proconsul, Sergius Paulus, is taken from the Felix of Masaccio, though one is a front figure, and the other seen in profile; the action is likewise somewhat changed; but it is plain

Raffaelle had that figure in his mind. There is a circumstance indeed, which I mention by the bye, which marks it very particularly; Sergius Paulus wears a crown of laurel; this is hardly reconcileable to strict propriety, and the *costume*, of which Raffaelle was in general a good observer; but he found it so in Masaccio, and he did not bestow so much pains in disguise as to change it. It appears to me to be an excellent practice, thus to suppose the figures which you wish to adopt in the works of those great Painters to be statues; and to give, as Raffaelle has here given, another view, taking care to preserve all the spirit and grace you find in the original.

I should hope, from what has been lately said, that it is not necessary to guard myself against any supposition of recommending an entire dependence upon former masters. I do not desire that you should get other people to do your business, or to think for you; I only wish you to consult with, to call in, as Counsellors, men the most distinguished for their knowledge and experience, the result

of which counsel must ultimately depend upon yourself. Such conduct in the commerce of life has never been considered as disgraceful, or in any respect to imply intellectual imbecility; it is a sign rather of that true wisdom, which feels individual imperfection; and is conscious to itself how much collective observation is necessary to fill the immense extent, and to comprehend the infinite variety of nature. I recommend neither self-dependence nor plagiarism. I advise you only to take that assistance which every human being wants, and which, as appears from the examples that have been given, the greatest Painters have not disdained to accept. Let me add, that the diligence required in the search, and the exertion subsequent in accommodating those ideas to your own purpose, is a business which idleness will not, and ignorance cannot, perform. But in order more distinctly to explain what kind of borrowing I mean, when I recommend so anxiously the study of the works of great Masters, let us for a minute return again to Raffaelle, consider his method of practice,

and endeavour to imitate him, in his manner of imitating others.

The two figures of St. Paul which I lately mentioned, are so nobly conceived by Masaccio, that perhaps it was not in the power even of Raffaelle himself to raise and improve them, nor has he attempted it; but he has had the address to change in some measure without diminishing the grandeur of their character; he has substituted, in the place of a serene composed dignity, that animated expression which was necessary to the more active employment he has assigned them.

In the same manner he has given more animation to the figure of Sergius Paulus, and to that which is introduced in the picture of St. Paul preaching, of which little more than hints are given by Masaccio, which Raffaelle has finished. The closing the eyes of this figure, which in Masaccio might be easily mistaken for sleeping, is not in the least ambiguous in the Cartoon: his eyes indeed are closed, but they are closed

with such vehemence, that the agitation of a mind *perplexed in the extreme* is seen at the first glance; but what is most extraordinary, and I think particularly to be admired, is, that the same idea is continued through the whole figure, even to the drapery, which is so closely muffled about him, that even his hands are not seen; by this happy correspondence between the expression of the countenance, and the disposition of the parts, the figure appears to think from head to foot. Men of superior talents alone are capable of thus using and adapting other men's minds to their own purposes, or are able to make out and finish what was only in the original a hint or imperfect conception. A readiness in taking such hints, which escape the dull and ignorant, makes in my opinion no inconsiderable part of that faculty of the mind which is called Genius.

It often happens that hints may be taken and employed in a situation totally different from that in which they were originally employed. There is a figure of a Bacchante leaning backward, her head thrown quite

behind her, which seems to be a favourite invention, as it is so frequently repeated in basso-relievos, cameos, and intaglios; it is intended to express an enthusiastic frantick kind of joy. This figure Baccio Bandinelli, in a drawing that I have of that Master, of the Descent from the Cross, has adopted, (and he knew very well what was worth borrowing,) for one of the Marys, to express frantick agony of grief. It is curious to observe, and it is certainly true, that the extremes of contrary passions are with very little variation expressed by the same action.

If I were to recommend method in any part of the study of a Painter, it would be in regard to invention; that young Students should not presume to think themselves qualified to invent, till they were acquainted with those stores of invention the world already possesses, and had by that means accumulated sufficient materials for the mind to work with. It would certainly be no improper method of forming the mind of a young Artist, to begin with such exercises as the Italians call a *Pasticcio* composition of

the different excellencies which are dispersed in all other works of the same kind. It is not supposed that he is to stop here, but that he is to acquire by this means the art of selecting, first what is truly excellent in Art, and then what is still more excellent in Nature; a task, which, without this previous study, he will be but ill qualified to perform.

The doctrine which is here advanced, is acknowledged to be new, and to many may appear strange. But I only demand for it the reception of a stranger; a favourable and attentive consideration, without that entire confidence which might be claimed under authoritative recommendation.

After you have taken a figure, or any idea of a figure, from any of those great Painters, there is another operation still remaining, which I hold to be indispensably necessary, that is, never to neglect finishing from nature every part of the work. What is taken from a model, though the first idea may have been suggested by another, you have a just right to consider as your own

property. And here I cannot avoid mentioning a circumstance in placing the model, though to some it may appear trifling. It is better to possess the model with the attitude you require, than to place him with your own hands: by this means it happens often that the model puts himself in an action superior to your own imagination. It is a great matter to be in the way of accident, and to be watchful and ready to take advantage of it: besides; when you fix the position of a model, there is danger of putting him in an attitude into which no man would naturally fall. This extends even to drapery. We must be cautious in touching and altering a fold of the stuff, which serves as a model, for fear of giving it inadvertently a forced form; and it is perhaps better to take the chance of another casual throw, than to alter the position in which it was at first accidentally cast.

Rembrandt, in order to take the advantage of accident, appears often to have used the pallet-knife to lay his colours on the canvass, instead of the pencil. Whether it is the

knife or any other instrument, it suffices if it is something that does not follow exactly the will. Accident in the hands of an Artist who knows how to take the advantage of its hints, will often produce bold and capricious beauties of handling and facility, such as he would not have thought of, or ventured, with his pencil, under the regular restraint of his hand. However, this is fit only on occasions where no correctness of form is required, such as clouds, stumps of trees, rocks, or broken ground. Works produced in an accidental manner will have the same free unrestrained air as the works of nature, whose particular combinations seem to depend upon accident.

I again repeat, you are never to lose sight of nature; the instant you do, you are all abroad, at the mercy of every gust of fashion, without knowing or seeing the point to which you ought to steer. Whatever trips you make, you must still have nature in your eye. Such deviations as art necessarily requires, I hope in a future Discourse to be able to explain. In the mean time, let me recom-

mend to you, not to have too great dependance on your practice or memory, however strong those impressions may have been which are there deposited. They are for ever wearing out, and will be at last obliterated, unless they are continually refreshed and repaired.

It is not uncommon to meet with artists who from a long neglect of cultivating this necessary intimacy with Nature, do not even know her when they see her; she appearing a stranger to them, from their being so long habituated to their own representation of her. I have heard Painters acknowledge; though in that acknowledgment no degradation of themselves was intended, that they could do better without Nature than with her; or as they expressed it themselves, *that it only put them out.* A Painter with such ideas and such habits, is indeed in a most hopeless state. *The art of seeing Nature*, or in other words, the art of using Models, is in reality the great object, the point to which all our studies are directed. As for the power of being able to do tolerably well, from practice alone, let it be valued according to its worth,

But I do not see in what manner it can be sufficient for the production of correct, excellent, and finished Pictures. Works deserving this character never were produced, nor ever will arise, from memory alone; and I will venture to say, that an Artist who brings to his work a mind tolerably furnished with the general principles of Art, and a taste formed upon the works of good Artists, in short who knows in what excellence consists, will, with the assistance of Models, which we will likewise suppose he has learnt the art of using, be an over-match for the greatest Painter that ever lived who should be debarred such advantages.

Our neighbours, the French, are much in this practice of *extempore* invention, and their dexterity is such as even to excite admiration, if not envy; but how rarely can this praise be given to their finished pictures!

The late Director of their Academy, *Boucher*, was eminent in this way. When I visited him some years since, in France, I found him at work on a very large Picture,

without drawings or models of any kind. On my remarking this particular circumstance, he said, when he was young, studying his art, he found it necessary to use models; but he had left them off for many years.

Such Pictures as this was, and such as I fear always will be produced by those who work solely from practice or memory, may be a convincing proof of the necessity of the conduct which I have recommended. However, in justice I cannot quit this Painter without adding, that in the former part of his life, when he was in the habit of having recourse to nature, he was not without a considerable degree of merit,---enough to make half the Painters of his country his imitators; he had often grace and beauty, and good skill in composition; but I think, all under the influence of a bad taste: his imitators are indeed abominable.

Those Artists who have quitted the service of nature, (whose service, when well understood, is *perfect freedom)* and have put

themselves under the direction of I know not what capricious fantastical mistress, who fascinates and overpowers their whole mind, and from whose dominion there are no hopes of their being ever reclaimed, (since they appear perfectly satisfied, and not at all conscious of their forlorn situation,) like the transformed followers of Comus,—

> Not once perceive their foul disfigurement;
> But boast themselves more comely than before.

Methinks, such men, who have found out so short a path, have no reason to complain of the shortness of life, and the extent of art; since life is so much longer than is wanted for their improvement, or indeed is necessary for the accomplishment of their idea of perfection. On the contrary, he who recurs to nature, at every recurrence renews his strength. The rules of art he is never likely to forget; they are few and simple; but nature is refined, subtle, and infinitely various, beyond the power and retention of memory; it is necessary, therefore, to have continual recourse to her. In this intercourse,

there is no end of his improvement; the longer he lives, the nearer he approaches to the true and perfect idea of Art.

# DISCOURSE XIII.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES,

DECEMBER 11, 1786.

# DISCOURSE XIII.

ART NOT MERELY IMITATION, BUT UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE IMAGINATION.—IN WHAT MANNER POETRY, PAINTING, ACTING, GARDENING, AND ARCHITECTURE, DEPART FROM NATURE.

GENTLEMEN,

TO discover beauties, or to point out faults, in the works of celebrated Masters, and to compare the conduct of one Artist with another, is certainly no mean or inconsiderable part of criticism; but this is still no more than to know the art through the Artist. This test of investigation must have two capital defects; it must be narrow, and it must be uncertain. To enlarge the boundaries of the Art of Painting, as well as to fix its principles, it will be necessary, that, *that* art, and *those* principles, should be considered in their correspondence with the principles of the other arts, which like this, address themselves primarily and principally to the imagination. When those connected

and kindred principles are brought together to be compared, another comparison will grow out of this; that is, the comparison of them all with those of human nature, from whence arts derive the materials upon which they are to produce their effects.

When this comparison of art with art, and of all arts with the nature of man, is once made with success, our guiding lines are as well ascertained and established, as they can be in matters of this description.

This, as it is the highest style of criticism, is at the same time the soundest; for it refers to the eternal and immutable nature of things.

You are not to imagine that I mean to open to you at large, or to recommend to your research, the whole of this vast field of science. It is certainly much above my faculties to reach it; and though it may not be above yours to comprehend it fully, if it were fully and properly brought before you, yet perhaps the most perfect criticism requires habits of speculation and abstraction, not very

consistent with the employment which ought to occupy, and the habits of mind which ought to prevail in a practical Artist. I only point out to you these things, that when you do criticise, (as all who work on a plan will criticise more or less,) your criticism may be built on the foundation of true principles; and that though you may not always travel a great way, the way that you do travel may be the right road.

I observe, as a fundamental ground, common to all the Arts with which we have any concern in this discourse, that they address themselves only to two faculties of the mind, its imagination and its sensibility.

All theories which attempt to direct or to control the Art, upon any principles falsely called rational, which we form to ourselves upon a supposition of what ought in reason to be the end or means of Art, independent of the known first effect produced by objects on the imagination, must be false and delusive. For though it may appear bold to say it, the imagination is here the residence of truth.

If the imagination be affected, the conclusion is fairly drawn; if it be not affected, the reasoning is erroneous, because the end is not obtained; the effect itself being the test, and the only test, of the truth and efficacy of the means.

There is in the commerce of life, as in Art, a sagacity which is far from being contradictory to right reason, and is superior to any occasional exercise of that faculty; which supersedes it; and does not wait for the slow progress of deduction, but goes at once, by what appears a kind of intuition, to the conclusion. A man endowed with this faculty, feels and acknowledges the truth, though it is not always in his power, perhaps, to give a reason for it; because he cannot recollect and bring before him all the materials that gave birth to his opinion; for very many and very intricate considerations may unite to form the principle, even of small and minute parts, involved in, or dependant on a great system of things: though these in process of time are forgotten, the right impression still remains fixed in his mind.

This impression is the result of the accumulated experience of our whole life, and has been collected, we do not always know how, or when. But this mass of collective observation, however acquired, ought to prevail over that reason, which however powerfully exerted on any particular occasion, will probably comprehend but a partial view of the subject; and our conduct in life as well as in the Arts, is, or ought to be, generally governed by this habitual reason: it is our happiness that we are enabled to draw on such funds. If we were obliged to enter into a theoretical deliberation on every occasion, before we act, life would be at a stand, and Art would be impracticable.

It appears to me therefore, that our first thoughts, that is, the effect which any thing produces on our minds, on its first appearance, is never to be forgotten; and it demands for that reason, because it is the first, to be laid up with care. If this be not done, the Artist may happen to impose on himself by partial reasoning; by a cold consideration of those animated thoughts which proceed, not

perhaps from caprice or rashness, (as he may afterwards conceit,) but from the fulness of his mind, enriched with the copious stores of all the various inventions which he had ever seen, or had ever passed in his mind. These ideas are infused into his design, without any conscious effort; but, if he be not on his guard, he may re-consider and correct them, till the whole matter is reduced to a common-place invention.

This is sometimes the effect of what I mean to caution you against; that is to say, an unfounded distrust of the imagination and feeling, in favour of narrow, partial, confined, argumentative theories; and of principles that seem to apply to the design in hand; without considering those general impressions on the fancy in which real principles of *sound reason*, and of much more weight and importance, are involved, and, as it were, lie hid, under the appearance of a sort of vulgar sentiment.

Reason, without doubt, must ultimately determine every thing; at this minute it is

required to inform us when that very reason is to give way to feeling.

Though I have often spoke of that mean conception of our art which confines it to mere imitation, I must add, that it may be narrowed to such a mere matter of experiment, as to exclude from it the application of science, which alone gives dignity and compass to any art. But to find proper foundations for science is neither to narrow or to vulgarise it; and this is sufficiently exemplified in the success of experimental philosophy. It is the false system of reasoning, grounded on a partial view of things, against which I would most earnestly guard you. And I do it the rather, because those narrow theories, so coincident with the poorest and most miserable practice, and which are adopted to give it countenance, have not had their origin in the poorest minds, but in the mistakes, or possibly in the mistaken interpretations, of great and commanding authorities. We are not therefore in this case misled by feeling, but by false speculation.

When such a man as Plato speaks of Painting as only an imitative art, and that our pleasure proceeds from observing and acknowledging the truth of the imitation, I think he misleads us by a partial theory. It is in this poor, partial, and so far, false, view of the art, that Cardinal Bembo has chosen to distinguish even Raffaelle himself, whom our enthusiasm honours with the name of Divine. The same sentiment is adopted by Pope in his epitaph on Sir Godfrey Kneller; and he turns the panegyrick solely on imitation, as it is a sort of deception.

I shall not think my time misemployed, if by any means I may contribute to confirm your opinion of what ought to be the object of your pursuit; because, though the best criticks must always have exploded this strange idea, yet I know that there is a disposition towards a perpetual recurrence to it, on account of its simplicity and superficial plausibility. For this reason I shall beg leave to lay before you a few thoughts on this subject; to throw out some

hints that may lead your minds to an opinion, (which I take to be the truth,) that Painting is not only to be considered as an imitation, operating by deception, but that it is, and ought to be, in many points of view, and strictly speaking, no imitation at all of external nature. Perhaps it ought to be as far removed from the vulgar idea of imitation, as the refined civilized state in which we live, is removed from a gross state of nature; and those who have not cultivated their imaginations, which the majority of mankind certainly have not, may be said, in regard to arts, to continue in this state of nature. Such men will always prefer imitation to that excellence which is addressed to another faculty that they do not possess; but these are not the persons to whom a Painter is to look, any more than a judge of morals and manners ought to refer controverted points upon those subjects to the opinions of people taken from the banks of the Ohio, or from New Holland.

It is the lowest style only of arts, whether of Painting, Poetry, or Musick, that may be

said, in the vulgar sense, to be naturally pleasing. The higher efforts of those arts, we know by experience, do not affect minds wholly uncultivated. This refined taste is the consequence of education and habit; we are born only with a capacity of entertaining this refinement, as we are born with a disposition to receive and obey all the rules and regulations of society; and so far it may be said to be natural to us, and no further.

What has been said, may show the Artist how necessary it is, when he looks about him for the advice and criticism of his friends, to make some distinction of the character, taste, experience, and observation in this Art, of those, from whom it is received. An ignorant uneducated man may, like Apelles's critick, be a competent judge of the truth of the representation of a sandal; or to go somewhat higher, like Moliere's old woman, may decide upon what is nature, in regard to comick humour; but a critick in the higher style of art, ought to possess the same refined taste, which directed the Artist in his work.

To illustrate this principle by a comparison with other Arts, I shall now produce some instances to show, that they, as well as our own Art, renounce the narrow idea of nature, and the narrow theories derived from that mistaken principle, and apply to that reason only which informs us not what imitation is,—a natural representation of a given object,—but what it is natural for the imagination to be delighted with. And perhaps there is no better way of acquiring this knowledge, than by this kind of analogy: each art will corroborate and mutually reflect the truth on the other. Such a kind of juxtaposition may likewise have this use, that whilst the Artist is amusing himself in the contemplation of other Arts, he may habitually transfer the principles of those Arts to that which he professes; which ought to be always present to his mind, and to which every thing is to be referred.

So far is Art from being derived from, or having any immediate intercourse with, particular nature as its model, that there are many Arts that set out with a professed deviation from it.

This is certainly not so exactly true in regard to Painting and Sculpture. Our elements are laid in gross common nature,—an exact imitation of what is before us: but when we advance to the higher state, we consider this power of imitation, though first in the order of acquisition, as by no means the highest in the scale of perfection.

Poetry addresses itself to the same faculties and the same dispositions as Painting, though by different means. The object of both is to accommodate itself to all the natural propensities and inclinations of the mind. The very existence of Poetry depends on the licence it assumes of deviating from actual nature, in order to gratify natural propensities by other means, which are found by experience full as capable of affording such gratification. It sets out with a language in the highest degree artificial, a construction of measured words, such as never is, nor ever was used by man. Let this measure be what it may, whether hexameter or any other metre used in Latin or Greek, —or Rhyme, or blank Verse varied with

pauses and accents, in modern languages,—they are all equally removed from nature, and equally a violation of common speech. When this artificial mode has been established as the vehicle of sentiment, there is another principle in the human mind, to which the work must be referred, which still renders it more artificial, carries it still further from common nature, and deviates only to render it more perfect. That principle is the sense of congruity, coherence, and consistency, which is a real existing principle in man; and it must be gratified. Therefore having once adopted a style and a measure not found in common discourse, it is required that the sentiments also should be in the same proportion elevated above common nature, from the necessity of there being an agreement of the parts among themselves, that one uniform whole may be produced.

To correspond therefore with this general system of deviation from nature, the manner in which poetry is offered to the ear, the tone in which it is recited, should be as far removed from the tone of conversation, as

the words of which that Poetry is composed. This naturally suggests the idea of modulating the voice by art, which I suppose may be considered as accomplished to the highest degree of excellence in the recitative of the Italian Opera; as we may conjecture it was in the Chorus that attended the ancient drama. And though the most violent passions, the highest distress, even death itself, are expressed in singing or recitative, I would not admit as sound criticism the condemnation of such exhibitions on account of their being unnatural.

If it is natural for our senses, and our imaginations, to be delighted with singing, with instrumental musick, with poetry, and with graceful action, taken separately; (none of them being in the vulgar sense natural, even in that separate state;) it is conformable to experience, and therefore agreeable to reason as connected with and referred to experience, that we should also be delighted with this union of musick, poetry, and graceful action joined to every circumstance of pomp and magnificence calculated to strike

the senses of the spectator. Shall reason stand in the way, and tell us that we ought not to like what we know we do like, and prevent us from feeling the full effect of this complicated exertion of art? This is what I would understand by poets and painters being allowed to dare every thing; for what can be more daring, than accomplishing the purpose and end of art, by a complication of means, none of which have their archetypes in actual nature?

So far therefore is servile imitation from being necessary, that whatever is familiar, or in any way reminds us of what we see and hear every day, perhaps does not belong to the higher provinces of art, either in poetry or painting. The mind is to be transported, as Shakspeare expresses it, *beyond the ignorant present*, to ages past. Another and a higher order of beings is supposed; and to those beings every thing which is introduced into the work must correspond. Of this conduct, under these circumstances, the Roman and Florentine schools afford sufficient examples. Their style by this means is raised and

elevated above all others; and by the same means the compass of art itself is enlarged.

We often see grave and great subjects attempted by artists of another school; who, though excellent in the lower class of art, proceeding on the principles which regulate that class, and not recollecting, or not knowing, that they were to address themselves to another faculty of the mind, have become perfectly ridiculous.

The picture which I have at present in my thoughts is a sacrifice of Iphigenia, painted by Jan Steen, a painter of whom I have formerly had occasion to speak with the highest approbation; and even in this picture, the subject of which is by no means adapted to his genius, there is nature and expression; but it is such expression, and the countenances are so familiar, and consequently so vulgar, and the whole accompanied with such finery of silks and velvets, that one would be almost tempted to doubt, whether the artist did not purposely intend to burlesque his subject.

Instances of the same kind we frequently see in poetry. Parts of Hobbes's translation of Homer are remembered and repeated merely for the familiarity and meanness of their phraseology, so ill corresponding with the ideas which ought to have been expressed, and, as I conceive, with the style of the original.

We may proceed in the same manner through the comparatively inferior branches of art. There are in works of that class, the same distinction of a higher and a lower style; and they take their rank and degree in proportion as the artist departs more, or less, from common nature, and makes it an object of his attention to strike the imagination of the spectator by ways belonging specially to art,—unobserved and untaught out of the school of its practice.

If our judgments are to be directed by narrow, vulgar, untaught or rather ill-taught reason, we must prefer a portrait by Denner or any other high finisher, to those of Titian or Vandyck; and a landscape of Vanderheyden

to those of Titian or Rubens; for they are certainly more exact representations of nature.

If we suppose a view of nature represented with all the truth of the *camera obscura*, and the same scene represented by a great Artist, how little and mean will the one appear in comparison of the other, where no superiority is supposed from the choice of the subject. The scene shall be the same, the difference only will be in the manner in which it is presented to the eye. With what additional superiority then will the same Artist appear when he has the power of selecting his materials, as well as elevating his style? Like Nicolas Poussin, he transports us to the environs of ancient Rome, with all the objects which a literary education makes so precious and interesting to man: or, like Sebastian Bourdon, he leads us to the dark antiquity of the Pyramids of Egypt; or, like Claude Lorrain, he conducts us to the tranquillity of Arcadian scenes and fairy land.

Like the history-painter, a painter of

landscapes in this style and with this conduct, sends the imagination back into antiquity; and, like the poet, he makes the elements sympathise with his subject: whether the clouds roll in volumes like those of Titian or Salvator Rosa,—or, like those of Claude, are gilded with the setting sun; whether the mountains have sudden and bold projections, or are gently sloped; whether the branches of his trees shoot out abruptly in right angles from their trunks, or follow each other with only a gentle inclination. All these circumstances contribute to the general character of the work, whether it be of the elegant, or of the more sublime kind. If we add to this the powerful materials of lightness and darkness, over which the Artist has complete dominion, to vary and dispose them as he pleases; to diminish, or increase them, as will best suit his purpose, and correspond to the general idea of his work; a landscape thus conducted, under the influence of a poetical mind, will have the same superiority over the more ordinary and common views, as Milton's *Allegro* and *Pensoroso* have over a cold prosaick narration or description; and

such a picture would make a more forcible impression on the mind than the real scenes, were they presented before us.

If we look abroad to other Arts, we may observe the same distinction, the same division into two classes; each of them acting under the influence of two different principles, in which the one follows nature, the other varies it, and sometimes departs from it.

The Theatre, which is said *to hold the mirrour up to nature*, comprehends both those ideas. The lower kind of Comedy, or Farce, like the inferior style of Painting, the more naturally it is represented, the better; but the higher appears to me to aim no more at imitation, so far as it belongs to any thing like deception, or to expect that the spectators should think that the events there represented are really passing before them, than Raffaelle in his Cartoons, or Poussin in his Sacraments, expected it to be believed, even for a moment, that what they exhibited were real figures.

For want of this distinction, the world is filled with false criticism. Raffaelle is praised for naturalness and deception, which he certainly has not accomplished, and as certainly never intended; and our late great actor, Garrick, has been as ignorantly praised by his friend Fielding; who doubtless imagined he had hit upon an ingenious device, by introducing in one of his novels, (otherwise a work of the highest merit,) an ignorant man, mistaking Garrick's representation of a scene in Hamlet, for reality. A very little reflection will convince us, that there is not one circumstance in the whole scene that is of the nature of deception. The merit and excellence of Shakspeare, and of Garrick, when they were engaged in such scenes, is of a different and much higher kind. But what adds to the falsity of this intended compliment, is, that the best stage-representation appears even more unnatural to a person of such a character, who is supposed never to have seen a play before, than it does to those who have had a habit of allowing for those necessary deviations from nature which the Art requires.

In theatrick representation, great allowances must always be made for the place in which the exhibition is represented; for the surrounding company, the lighted candles, the scenes visibly shifted in your sight, and the language of blank verse, so different from common English; which merely as English must appear surprising in the mouths of Hamlet, and all the court and natives of Denmark. These allowances are made; but their being made puts an end to all manner of deception: and further; we know that the more low, illiterate, and vulgar any person is, the less he will be disposed to make these allowances, and of course to be deceived by any imitation; the things in which the trespass against nature and common probability is made in favour of the theatre, being quite within the sphere of such uninformed men.

Though I have no intention of entering into all the circumstances of unnaturalness in theatrical representations, I must observe, that even the expression of violent passion, is not always the most excellent in proportion

as it is the most natural; so, great terror and such disagreeable sensations, may be communicated to the audience, that the balance may be destroyed by which pleasure is preserved, and holds its predominancy in the mind: violent distortion of action, harsh screamings of the voice, however great the occasion, or however natural on such occasion, are therefore not admissible in the theatrick art. Many of these allowed deviations from nature arise from the necessity which there is, that every thing should be raised and enlarged beyond its natural state; that the full effect may come home to the spectator, which otherwise would be lost in the comparatively extensive space of the Theatre. Hence the deliberate and stately step, the studied grace of action, which seems to enlarge the dimensions of the Actor, and alone to fill the stage. All this unnaturalness, though right and proper in its place, would appear affected and ridiculous in a private room; *quid enim deformius, quàm scenam in vitam transferre?*

And here I must observe, and I believe it

may be considered as a general rule, that no Art can be grafted with success on another art. For though they all profess the same origin, and to proceed from the same stock, yet each has its own peculiar modes both of imitating nature, and of deviating from it, each for the accomplishment of its own particular purpose. These deviations, more especially, will not bear transplantation to another soil.

If a Painter should endeavour to copy the theatrical pomp and parade of dress and attitude, instead of that simplicity, which is not a greater beauty in life, than it is in Painting, we should condemn such Pictures, as painted in the meanest style.

So also Gardening, as far as Gardening is an Art, or entitled to that appellation, is a deviation from nature; for if the true taste consists, as many hold, in banishing every appearance of Art, or any traces of the footsteps of man, it would then be no longer a Garden. Even though we define it, "Nature to advantage dress'd," and in some

sense is such, and much more beautiful and commodious for the recreation of man; it is however, when so dressed, no longer a subject for the pencil of a Landscape-Painter, as all Landscape-Painters know, who love to have recourse to Nature herself, and to dress her according to the principles of their own Art; which are far different from those of Gardening, even when conducted according to the most approved principles; and such as a Landscape-Painter himself would adopt in the disposition of his own grounds, for his own private satisfaction.

I have brought together as many instances as appear necessary to make out the several points which I wished to suggest to your consideration in this Discourse; that your own thoughts may lead you further in the use that may be made of the analogy of the Arts; and of the restraint which a full understanding of the diversity of many of their principles ought to impose on the employment of that analogy.

The great end of all those arts is, to make

an impression on the imagination and the feeling. The imitation of nature frequently does this. Sometimes it fails, and something else succeeds. I think therefore the true test of all the arts, is not solely whether the production is a true copy of nature, but whether it answers the end of art, which is to produce a pleasing effect upon the mind.

It remains only to speak a few words of Architecture, which does not come under the denomination of an imitative art. It applies itself, like Musick, (and I believe we may add Poetry,) directly to the imagination, without the invention of any kind of imitation.

There is in Architecture, as in Painting, an inferior branch of art, in which the imagination appears to have no concern. It does not, however, acquire the name of a polite and liberal art, from its usefulness, or administering to our wants or necessities, but from some higher principle: we are sure that in the hands of a man of genius it is capable of inspiring sentiment, and of filling the mind with great and sublime ideas.

It may be worth the attention of Artists to consider what materials are in their hands, that may contribute to this end; and whether this art has it not in its power to address itself to the imagination with effect, by more ways than are generally employed by Architects.

To pass over the effect produced by that general symmetry and proportion, by which the eye is delighted, as the ear is with musick, Architecture certainly possesses many principles in common with Poetry, and Painting. Among those which may be reckoned as the first, is, that of affecting the imagination by means of association of ideas. Thus, for instance, as we have naturally a veneration for antiquity, whatever building brings to our remembrance ancient customs and manners, such as the castles of the Barons of ancient Chivalry, is sure to give this delight. Hence it is that *towers and battlements** are so often selected by the

* Towers and Battlements it sees
Bosom'd high in tufted trees. MILTON, L'ALL. R.

Painter and the Poet, to make a part of the composition of their ideal Landscape; and it is from hence in a great degree, that in the buildings of Vanbrugh, who was a Poet as well as an Architect, there is a greater display of imagination, than we shall find perhaps in any other, and this is the ground of the effect we feel in many of his works, notwithstanding the faults with which many of them are justly charged. For this purpose, Vanbrugh appears to have had recourse to some of the principles of the Gothick Architecture; which, though not so ancient as the Grecian, is more so to our imagination, with which the Artist is more concerned than with absolute truth.

The Barbarick splendour of those Asiatic Buildings, which are now publishing by a member of this Academy*, may possibly, in the same manner, furnish an Architect, not with models to copy, but with hints of composition and general effect, which would not otherwise have occurred.

* Mr. Hodges.

It is, I know, a delicate and hazardous thing, (and as such I have already pointed it out,) to carry the principles of one art to another, or even to reconcile in one object the various modes of the same Art, when they proceed on different principles. The sound rules of the Grecian Architecture are not to be lightly sacrificed. A deviation from them, or even an addition to them, is like a deviation or addition to, or from, the rules of other Arts,—fit only for a great master, who is thoroughly conversant in the nature of man, as well as all combinations in his own Art.

It may not be amiss for the Architect to take advantage *sometimes* of that to which I am sure the Painter ought always to have his eyes open, I mean the use of accidents: to follow when they lead, and to improve them, rather than always to trust to a regular plan. It often happens that additions have been made to houses, at various times, for use or pleasure. As such buildings depart from regularity, they now and then acquire something of scenery by

this accident, which I should think might not unsuccessfully be adopted by an Architect, in an original plan, if it does not too much interfere with convenience. Variety and intricacy is a beauty and excellence in every other of the arts which address the imagination; and why not in Architecture?

The forms and turnings of the streets of London, and other old towns, are produced by accident, without any original plan or design; but they are not always the less pleasant to the walker or spectator, on that account. On the contrary, if the city had been built on the regular plan of Sir Christopher Wren, the effect might have been, as we know it is in some new parts of the town, rather unpleasing; the uniformity might have produced weariness, and a slight degree of disgust.

I can pretend to no skill in the detail of Architecture. I judge now of the art, merely as a Painter. When I speak of Vanbrugh, I mean to speak of him in the

language of our art. To speak then of Vanbrugh in the language of a Painter, he had originality of invention, he understood light and shadow, and had great skill in composition. To support his principal object, he produced his second and third groups or masses; he perfectly understood in his Art what is the most difficult in ours, the conduct of the back-ground; by which the design and invention is set off to the greatest advantage. What the back-ground is in Painting, in Architecture is the real ground on which the building is erected; and no Architect took greater care than he that his work should not appear crude and hard: that is, it did not abruptly start out of the ground without expectation or preparation.

This is a tribute which a Painter owes to an Architect who composed like a Painter; and was defrauded of the due reward of his merit by the Wits of his time, who did not understand the principles of composition in poetry better than he; and who knew little, or nothing, of what he understood

perfectly, the general ruling principles of Architecture and Painting. His fate was that of the great Perrault; both were the objects of the petulant sarcasms of factious men of letters; and both have left some of the fairest ornaments which to this day decorate their several countries; the façade of the Louvre, Blenheim, and Castle-Howard.

Upon the whole, it seems to me, that the object and intention of all the Arts is to supply the natural imperfection of things, and often to gratify the mind by realizing and embodying what never existed but in the imagination.

It is allowed on all hands, that facts, and events, however they may bind the Historian, have no dominion over the Poet or the Painter. With us, History is made to bend and conform to this great idea of Art. And why? Because these Arts, in their highest province, are not addressed to the gross senses; but to the desires of the mind, to that spark of divinity which we have within, impatient of being circumscribed and pent

up by the world which is about us. Just so much as our Art has of this, just so much of dignity, I had almost said of divinity, it exhibits; and those of our Artists who possessed this mark of distinction in the highest degree, acquired from thence the glorious appellation of DIVINE.

# DISCOURSE XIV.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES.

DECEMBER 10, 1788.

# DISCOURSE XIV.

CHARACTER OF GAINSBOROUGH;—HIS EXCELLENCIES AND DEFECTS.

GENTLEMEN,

IN the study of our Art, as in the study of all Arts, something is the result of *our own* observation of Nature; something, and that not little, the effect of the example of those who have studied the same nature before us, and who have cultivated before us the same Art, with diligence and success. The less we confine ourselves in the choice of those examples, the more advantage we shall derive from them; and the nearer we shall bring our performances to a correspondence with nature and the great general rules of Art. When we draw our examples from remote and revered antiquity,—with some advantage undoubtedly in that selection, we subject ourselves to some inconveniences.

We may suffer ourselves to be too much led away by great names, and to be too much subdued by overbearing authority. Our learning, in that case, is not so much an exercise of our judgement, as a proof of our docility. We find ourselves, perhaps, too much overshadowed; and the character of our pursuits is rather distinguished by the tameness of the follower, than animated by the spirit of emulation. It is sometimes of service, that our examples should be *near* us; and such as raise a reverence, sufficient to induce us carefully to observe them, yet not so great as to prevent us from engaging with them in something like a generous contention.

We have lately lost Mr. Gainsborough, one of the greatest ornaments of our Academy. It is not our business here, to make panegyricks on the living, or even on the dead who were of our body. The praise of the former might bear appearance of adulation; and the latter, of untimely justice; perhaps of envy to those whom we have still the happiness to enjoy, by an oblique suggestion of

invidious comparisons. In discoursing therefore on the talents of the late Mr. Gainsborough, my object is, not so much to praise or to blame him, as to draw from his excellencies and defects, matter of instruction to the Students in our academy. If ever this nation should produce genius sufficient to acquire to us the honourable distinction of an English School, the name of Gainsborough will be transmitted to posterity, in the history of the Art, among the very first of that rising name. That our reputation in the Arts is now only rising, must be acknowledged; and we must expect our advances to be attended with old prejudices, as adversaries, and not as supporters; standing in this respect in a very different situation from the late artists of the Roman School, to whose reputation ancient prejudices have certainly contributed: the way was prepared for them, and they may be said rather to have lived in the reputation of their country, than to have contributed to it; whilst whatever celebrity is obtained by English Artists, can arise only from the operation of a fair and true comparison. And when they communicate to their

country a share of their reputation, it is a portion of fame not borrowed from others, but solely acquired by their own labour and talents. As Italy has undoubtedly a prescriptive right to an administration bordering on prejudice, as a soil peculiarly adapted, congenial, and, we may add, destined to the production of men of great genius in our Art, we may not unreasonably suspect that a portion of the great fame of some of their late artists has been owing to the general readiness and disposition of mankind, to acquiesce in their original prepossessions in favour of the productions of the Roman School.

On this ground, however unsafe, I will venture to prophesy, that two of the last distinguished painters of that country, I mean Pompeio Battoni, and Raffaelle Mengs, however great their names may at present sound in our ears, will very soon fall into the rank of Imperiale, Sebastian Concha, Placido Constanza, Masuccio, and the rest of their immediate predecessors; whose names, though equally renowned in their life-time, are now fallen into what is little

short of total oblivion. I do not say that those painters were not superior to the artist I allude to, and whose loss we lament, in a certain routine of practice, which, to the eyes of common observers, has the air of a learned composition, and bears a sort of superficial resemblance to the manner of the great men who went before them. I know this perfectly well; but I know likewise, that a man, looking for real and lasting reputation, must unlearn much of the common-place method so observable in the works of the artists whom I have named. For my own part, I confess, I take more interest in, and am more captivated with the powerful impression of nature, which Gainsborough exhibited in his portraits and in his landscapes, and the interesting simplicity and elegance of his little ordinary beggar-children, than with any of the works of that School, since the time of Andrea Sacchi, or perhaps, we may say Carlo Maratti; two painters who may truly be said to be ULTIMI ROMANORUM.

I am well aware how much I lay myself

open to the censure and ridicule of the academical professors of other nations, in preferring the humble attempts of Gainsborough to the works of those regular graduates in the great historical style. But we have the sanction of all mankind in preferring genius in a lower rank of art, to feebleness and insipidity in the highest.

It would not be to the present purpose, even if I had the means and materials, which I have not, to enter into the private life of Mr. Gainsborough. The history of his gradual advancement, and the means by which he acquired such excellence in his art, would come nearer to our purposes and wishes, if it were by any means attainable; but the slow progress of advancement is in general imperceptible to the man himself who makes it; it is the consequence of an accumulation of various ideas which his mind has received, he does not perhaps know how or when. Sometimes indeed it happens, that he may be able to mark the time when from the sight of a picture, a passage in an author, or a hint in conversation, he has received, as it were,

some new and guiding light, something like inspiration, by which his mind has been expanded; and is morally sure that his whole life and conduct has been affected by that accidental circumstance. Such interesting accounts, we may however sometimes obtain from a man who has acquired an uncommon habit of self-examination, and has attended to the progress of his own improvement.

It may not be improper to make mention of some of the customs and habits of this extraordinary man; points which come more within the reach of an observer; I however mean such only as are connected with his art, and indeed were, as I apprehend, the causes of his arriving to that high degree of excellence, which we see and acknowledge in his works. Of these causes we must state, as the fundamental, the love which he had to his art; to which, indeed, his whole mind appears to have been devoted, and to which every thing was referred; and this we may fairly conclude from various circumstances of his life, which were known to his intimate friends. Among others he had a habit of

continually remarking to those who happened to be about him whatever peculiarity of countenance, whatever accidental combination of figure, or happy effects of light and shadow, occurred in prospects, in the sky, in walking the streets, or in company. If, in his walks, he found a character that he liked, and whose attendance was to be obtained, he ordered him to his house: and from the fields he brought into his painting-room, stumps of trees, weeds, and animals of various kinds; and designed them, not from memory, but immediately from the objects. He even framed a kind of model of landscapes on his table; composed of broken stones, dried herbs, and pieces of looking glass, which he magnified and improved into rocks, trees and water. How far this latter practice may be useful in giving hints, the professors of landscape can best determine. Like every other technical practice, it seems to me wholly to depend on the general talent of him who uses it. Such methods may be nothing better than contemptible and mischievous trifling; or they may be aids. I think upon the whole,

unless we constantly refer to real nature, that practice may be more likely to do harm than good. I mention it only, as it shows the solicitude and extreme activity which he had about every thing that related to his art; that he wished to have his objects embodied as it were, and distinctly before him; that he neglected nothing which could keep his faculties in exercise, and derived hints from every sort of combination.

We must not forget whilst we are on this subject, to make some remarks on his custom of painting by night, which confirms what I have already mentioned,—his great affection to his art; since he could not amuse himself in the evening by any other means so agreeable to himself. I am indeed much inclined to believe that it is a practice very advantageous and improving to an artist; for by this means he will acquire a new and a higher perception of what is great and beautiful in Nature. By candle-light, not only objects appear more beautiful, but from their being in a greater breadth of light and shadow, as well as having a

greater breadth and uniformity of colour, nature appears in a higher style; and even the flesh seems to take a higher and richer tone of colour. Judgment is to direct us in the use to be made of this method of study; but the method itself is, I am very sure, advantageous. I have often imagined that the two great colourists, Titian and Correggio, though I do not know that they painted by night, formed their high ideas of colouring from the effects of objects by this artificial light: but I am more assured, that whoever attentively studies the first and best manner of Guercino, will be convinced that he either painted by this light, or formed his manner on this conception.

Another practice Gainsborough had, which is worth mentioning, as it is certainly worthy of imitation; I mean his manner of forming all the parts of his picture together; the whole going on at the same time, in the same manner as nature creates her works. Though this method is not uncommon to those who have been regularly educated, yet probably it was suggested to him by his own

natural sagacity. That this custom is not universal appears from the practice of a painter whom I have just mentioned, Pompeio Battoni, who finished his historical pictures part after part, and in his portraits completely finished one feature before he proceeded to another. The consequence was, as might be expected; the countenance was never well expressed; and, as the painters say, the whole was not well put together.

The first thing required to excel in our art, or I believe in any art, is not only a love for it, but even an enthusiastick ambition to excel in it. This never fails of success proportioned to the natural abilities with which the artist has been endowed by Providence. Of Gainsborough, we certainly know, that his passion was not the acquirement of riches, but excellence in his art; and to enjoy that honourable fame which is sure to attend it.—That *he felt this ruling passion strong in death*, I am myself a witness. A few days before he died, he wrote me a letter, to express his acknowledgements for the good opinion I

entertained of his abilities, and the manner in which (he had been informed) I always spoke of him; and desired he might see me once more before he died. I am aware how flattering it is to myself to be thus connected with the dying testimony which this excellent painter bore to his art. But I cannot prevail on myself to suppress, that I was not connected with him, by any habits of familiarity: if any little jealousies had subsisted between us, they were forgotten, in those moments of sincerity; and he turned towards me as one, who was engrossed by the same pursuits, and who deserved his good opinion, by being sensible of his excellence. Without entering into a detail of what passed at this last interview, the impression of it upon my mind was, that his regret at losing life, was principally the regret of leaving his art; and more especially as he now began, he said, to see what his deficiencies were; which, he said, he flattered himself in his last works were in some measure supplied.

When such a man as Gainsborough arrives

to great fame, without the assistance of an academical education, without travelling to Italy, or any of those preparatory studies which have been so often recommended, he is produced as an instance, how little such studies are necessary; since so great excellence may be acquired without them. This is an inference not warranted by the success of any individual; and I trust it will not be thought that I wish to make this use of it.

It must be remembered that the style and department of art which Gainsborough chose, and in which he so much excelled, did not require that he should go out of his own country for the objects of his study; they were every where about him; he found them in the streets, and in the fields; and from the models thus accidentally found, he selected with great judgement such as suited his purpose. As his studies were directed to the living world principally, he did not pay a general attention to the works of the various masters, though they are, in my opinion, always of great use, even when the character of our subject requires us to

depart from some of their principles. It cannot be denied, that excellence in the department of the art which he professed may exist without them; that in such subjects, and in the manner that belongs to them, the want of them is supplied, and more than supplied, by natural sagacity, and a minute observation of particular nature. If Gainsborough did not look at nature with a poet's eye, it must be acknowledged that he saw her with the eye of a painter; and gave a faithful, if not a poetical representation of what he had before him.

Though he did not much attend to the works of the great historical painters of former ages, yet he was well aware that the language of the art—the art of imitation, —must be learned somewhere; and as he knew that he could not learn it in an equal degree from his contemporaries, he very judiciously applied himself to the Flemish School, who are undoubtedly the greatest masters of one necessary branch of art; and he did not need to go out of his own country for examples of that school: from

that he learnt the harmony of colouring, the management and disposition of light and shadow, and every means which the masters of it practised, to ornament and give splendour to their works. And to satisfy himself as well as others, how well he knew the mechanism and artifice which they employed to bring out that tone of colour which we so much admired in their works, he occasionally made copies from Rubens, Teniers, and Vandyck, which it would be no disgrace to the most accurate connoisseur to mistake, at the first sight, for the works of those masters. What he thus learned, he applied to the originals of nature, which he saw with his own eyes; and imitated, not in the manner of those masters, but in his own.

Whether he most excelled in portraits, landscapes, or fancy-pictures, it is difficult to determine: whether his portraits were most admirable for exact truth of resemblance, or his landscapes for a portrait-like representation of nature, such as we see in the works of Rubens, Ruysdaal, and others of those schools. In his fancy-pictures, when

he had fixed on his object of imitation, whether it was the mean and vulgar form of a wood-cutter, or a child of an interesting character, as he did not attempt to raise the one, so neither did he lose any of the natural grace and elegance of the other; such a grace, and such an elegance, as are more frequently found in cottages than in courts. This excellence was his own, the result of his particular observation and taste; for this he was certainly not indebted to the Flemish School, nor indeed to any School; for his grace was not academical or antique, but selected by himself from the great school of nature; and there are yet a thousand modes of grace, which are neither theirs, nor his, but lie open in the multiplied scenes and figures of life, to be brought out by skilful and faithful observers.

Upon the whole, we may justly say, that whatever he attempted he carried to a high degree of excellence. It is to the credit of his good sense and judgement, that he never did attempt that style of historical

painting, for which his previous studies had made no preparation.

And here it naturally occurs to oppose the sensible conduct of Gainsborough in this respect, to that of our late excellent Hogarth, who, with all his extraordinary talents, was not blessed with this knowledge of his own deficiency; or of the bounds which were set to the extent of his own powers. After this admirable artist had spent the greater part of his life in an active, busy, and we may add, successful attention to the ridicule of life; after he had invented a new species of dramatick painting, in which probably he will never be equalled, and had stored his mind with infinite materials to explain and illustrate the domestick and familiar scenes of common life, which were generally, and ought to have been always, the subject of his pencil; he very imprudently, or rather presumptuously: attempted the great historical style, for which his previous habits had by no means prepared him: he was indeed so entirely unacquainted with the principles of

this style, that he was not even aware that any artificial preparation was at all necessary. It is to be regretted, that any part of the life of such a genius should be fruitlessly employed. Let his failure teach us not to indulge ourselves in the vain imagination, that by a momentary resolution we can give either dexterity to the hand, or a new habit to the mind.

I have, however, little doubt, but that the same sagacity, which enabled those two extraordinary men, to discover their true object, and the peculiar excellence of that branch of art which they cultivated, would have been equally effectual in discovering the principles of the higher style; if they had investigated those principles with the same eager industry, which they exerted in their own department. As Gainsborough never attempted the heroick style, so neither did he destroy the character and uniformity of his own style, by the idle affectation of introducing mythological learning in any of his pictures. Of this boyish folly we see instances enough, even in the works of great

painters. When the Dutch School attempt this poetry of our art in their landscapes, their performances are beneath criticism; they become only an object of laughter. This practice is hardly excusable, even in Claude Lorrain, who had shown more discretion, if he had never meddled with such subjects.

Our late ingenious Academician, Wilson, has I fear, been guilty, like many of his predecessors, of introducing gods and goddesses, ideal beings, into scenes which were by no means prepared to receive such personages. His landscapes were in reality too near common nature to admit supernatural objects. In consequence of this mistake, in a very admirable picture of a storm, which I have seen of his hand, many figures are introduced in the fore ground, some in apparent distress, and some struck dead, as a spectator would naturally suppose, by the lightning; had not the painter injudiciously (as I think) rather chosen that their death should be imputed to a little Apollo, who appears in the sky, with his

bent bow, and that those figures should be considered as the children of Niobe.

To manage a subject of this kind, a peculiar style of art is required; and it can only be done without impropriety, or even without ridicule, when we adapt the character of the landscape, and that too, in all its parts, to the historical or poetical representation. This is a very difficult adventure, and it requires a mind thrown back two thousand years, and as it were naturalized in antiquity, like that of Nicolo Poussin, to atchieve it. In the picture alluded to, the first idea that presents itself is that of wonder, at seeing a figure in so uncommon a situation as that in which the Apollo is placed; for the clouds on which he kneels have not the appearance of being able to support him; they have neither the substance nor the form fit for the receptacle of a human figure; and they do not possess in any respect that romantick character which is appropriated to such an object, and which alone can harmonize with poetical stories.

It appears to me, that such conduct is no less absurd, than if a plain man, giving a relation of a real distress, occasioned by an inundation accompanied with thunder and lightning, should, instead of simply relating the event, take it into his head, in order to give a grace to his narration, to talk of Jupiter Pluvius, or Jupiter and his thunderbolts, or any other figurative idea; an intermixture which, though in poetry, with its proper preparations and accompaniments, it might be managed with effect, yet in the instance before us would counteract the purpose of the narrator, and instead of being interesting, would be only ridiculous.

The Dutch and Flemish style of landscape, not even excepting those of Rubens, is unfit for poetical subjects; but to explain in what this ineptitude consists, or to point out all the circumstances that give nobleness, grandeur, and the poetick character, to style, in landscape, would require a long discourse of itself; and the end would be then perhaps but imperfectly attained. The painter who is ambitious of this perilous

excellence, must catch his inspiration from those who have cultivated with success the poetry, as it may be called, of the art; and they are few indeed.

I cannot quit this subject without mentioning two examples which occur to me at present, in which the poetical style of landscape may be seen happily executed; the one is Jacob's Dream by Salvator Rosa, and the other the Return of the Arc from captivity, by Sebastian Bourdon*. With whatever dignity those histories are presented to us in the language of Scripture, this style of painting possesses the same power of inspiring sentiments of grandeur and sublimity, and is able to communicate them to subjects which appear by no means adapted to receive them. A ladder against the sky has no very promising appearance of possessing a capacity to excite any heroick ideas; and the Arc, in the hands of a second-rate master, would have little more effect than a common waggon on the highway;

* This fine picture was in our author's collection; and was bequeathed by him to sir George Beaumont, Bart. M.

yet those subjects are so poetically treated throughout, the parts have such a correspondence with each other, and the whole and every part of the scene is so visionary, that it is impossible to look at them, without feeling, in some measure, the enthusiasm which seems to have inspired the painters.

By continual contemplation of such works, a sense of the higher excellencies of art will by degrees dawn on the imagination; at every review that sense will become more and more assured, until we come to enjoy a sober certainty of the real existence (if I may so express myself) of those almost ideal beauties; and the artist will then find no difficulty in fixing in his mind the principles by which the impression is produced; which he will feel and practice, though they are perhaps too delicate and refined, and too peculiar to the imitative art, to be conveyed to the mind by any other means.

To return to Gainsborough: the peculiarity of his manner, or style, or we may call it—the language in which he expressed

his ideas, has been considered by many as his greatest defect. But without altogether wishing to enter into the discussion—whether this peculiarity was a defect or not, intermixed, as it was, with great beauties, of some of which it was probably the cause, it becomes a proper subject of criticism and enquiry to a painter.

A novelty and peculiarity of manner, as it is often a cause of our approbation, so likewise it is often a ground of censure; as being contrary to the practice of other painters, in whose manner we have been initiated, and in whose favour we have perhaps been prepossessed from our infancy, for, fond as we are of novelty, we are upon the whole creatures of habit. However, it is certain, that all those odd scratches and marks, which on a close examination, are so observable in Gainsborough's pictures, and which even to experienced painters appear rather the effect of accident than design; this chaos, this uncouth and shapeless appearance, by a kind of magick, at a certain distance assumes form, and all the

parts seem to drop into their proper places; so that we can hardly refuse acknowledging the full effect of diligence, under the appearance of chance and hasty negligence. That Gainsborough himself considered this peculiarity in his manner and the power it possesses of exciting surprise, as a beauty in his works, I think may be inferred from the eager desire which we know he always expressed, that his pictures, at the Exhibition, should be seen near, as well as at a distance.

The slightness which we see in his best works, cannot always be imputed to negligence. However they may appear to superficial observers, painters know very well that a steady attention to the general effect takes up more time, and is much more laborious to the mind, than any mode of high finishing or smoothness, without such attention. His *handling*, *the manner of leaving the colours*, or in other words, the methods he used for producing the effect, had very much the appearance of the work of an artist who had never learned from others the usual and regular practice belonging to the art; but still,

like a man of strong intuitive perception of what was required, he found out a way of his own to accomplish his purpose.

It is no disgrace to the genius of Gainsborough, to compare him to such men as we sometimes meet with, whose natural eloquence appears even in speaking a language which they can scarce be said to understand; and who, without knowing the appropriate expression of almost any one idea, contrive to communicate the lively and forcible impressions of an energetick mind.

I think some apology may reasonably be made for his manner without violating truth, or running any risk of poisoning the minds of the younger students, by propagating false criticism, for the sake of raising the character of a favourite artist. It must be allowed, that this hatching manner of Gainsborough did very much contribute to the lightness of effect which is so eminent a beauty in his pictures; as on the contrary, much smoothness, and uniting the colours, is apt to produce heaviness. Every artist must have remarked,

how often that lightness of hand which was in his dead-colour, or first painting, escaped in the finishing, when he had determined the parts with more precision: and another loss he often experiences, which is of greater consequence; whilst he is employed in the detail, the effect of the whole together is either forgotten or neglected. The likeness of a portrait, as I have formerly observed, consists more in preserving the general effect of the countenance, than in the most minute finishing of the features, or any of the particular parts. Now Gainsborough's portraits were often little more, in regard to finishing, or determining the form of the features, than what generally attends a dead colour; but as he was always attentive to the general effect, or whole together, I have often imagined that this unfinished manner contributed even to that striking resemblance for which his portraits are so remarkable. Though this opinion may be considered as fanciful, yet I think a plausible reason may be given, why such a mode of painting should have such an effect. It is presupposed that in this undetermined manner there is the general effect;

enough to remind the spectator of the original; the imagination supplies the rest, and perhaps more satisfactory to himself, if not more exactly, than the artist, with all his care, could possibly have done. At the same time it must be acknowledged there is one evil attending this mode; that if the portrait were seen; previous to any knowledge of the original, different persons would form different ideas, and all would be disappointed at not finding the original correspond with their own conceptions; under the great latitude which indistinctness gives to the imagination to assume almost what character or form it pleases.

Every artist has some favourite part, on which he fixes his attention, and which he pursues with such eagerness, that it absorbs every other consideration; and he often falls into the opposite error of that which he would avoid, which is always ready to receive him. Now Gainsborough having truly a painter's eye for colouring, cultivated those effects of the art which proceed from colours; and sometimes appears to be indifferent to or to

neglect other excellencies. Whatever defects are acknowledged, let him still experience from us the same candour that we so freely give upon similar occasions to the ancient masters; let us not encourage that fastidious disposition, which is discontented with every thing short of perfection, and unreasonably require, as we sometimes do, a union of excellencies, not perhaps quite compatible with each other.—We may, on this ground, say even of the divine Raffaelle, that he might have finished his picture as highly and as correctly as was his custom, without heaviness of manner; and that Poussin might have preserved all his precision without hardness or dryness.

To show the difficulty of uniting solidity with lightness of manner, we may produce a picture of Rubens in the Church of St. Judule, at Brussels, as an example; the subject is, *Christ's charge to Peter*; which, as it is the highest, and smoothest, finished picture I remember to have seen of that master, so it is by far the heaviest; and if I had found it in any other place, I should have

suspected it to be a copy; for painters know very well, that it is principally by this air of facility, or the want of it, that originals are distinguished from copies.—A lightness of effect, produced by colour, and that produced by facility of handling, are generally united; a copy may preserve something of the one, it is true, but hardly ever of the other; a connoisseur therefore finds it often necessary to look carefully into the picture before he determines on its originality. Gainsborough possessed this quality of lightness of manner and effect, I think, to an unexampled degree of excellence; but it must be acknowledged, at the same time, that the sacrifice which he made to this ornament of our art, was too great; it was, in reality, preferring the lesser excellencies to the greater.

To conclude. However we may apologize for the deficiencies of Gainsborough, (I mean particularly his want of precision and finishing,) who so ingeniously contrived to cover his defects by his beauties; and who cultivated that department of art, where such defects are more easily excused; you are

to remember, that no apology can be made for this deficiency, in that style which this academy teaches, and which ought to be the object of your pursuit. It will be necessary for you, in the first place, never to lose sight of the great rules and principles of the art, as they are collected from the full body of the best general practice, and the most constant and uniform experience; this must be the ground-work of all your studies: afterwards you may profit, as in this case I wish you to profit, by the peculiar experience and personal talents of artists living and dead; you may derive lights, and catch hints, from their practice; but the moment you turn them into models, you fall infinitely below them; you may be corrupted by excellencies, not so much belonging to the art, as personal and appropriated to the artist; and become bad copies of good painters, instead of excellent imitators of the great universal truth of things.

# DISCOURSE XV.

DELIVERED TO THE STUDENTS OF

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY,

ON THE

## DISTRIBUTION OF THE PRIZES.

DECEMBER 10, 1790.

# DISCOURSE XV.

THE PRESIDENT TAKES LEAVE OF THE ACADEMY.—A REVIEW OF THE DISCOURSES.—THE STUDY OF THE WORKS OF MICHAEL ANGELO RECOMMENDED.

GENTLEMEN,

THE intimate connection which I have had with the ROYAL ACADEMY ever since its establishment, the social duties in which we have all mutually engaged for so many years, make any profession of attachment to this Institution, on my part, altogether superfluous; the influence of habit alone in such a connection would naturally have produced it.

Among men united in the same body, and engaged in the same pursuit, along with permanent friendship occasional differences will arise. In these disputes men are naturally too favourable to themselves, and think perhaps too hardly of their antagonists. But composed and constituted as we are, those

little contentions will be lost to others, and they ought certainly to be lost amongst ourselves in mutual esteem for talents and acquirements: every controversy ought to be, and I am persuaded, will be, sunk in our zeal for the perfection of our common Art.

In parting with the Academy, I shall remember with pride, affection, and gratitude, the support with which I have almost uniformly been honoured from the commencement of our intercourse. I shall leave you Gentlemen, with unaffected cordial wishes for your future concord, and with a well-founded hope, that in that concord, the auspicious and not obscure origin of our Academy may be forgotten in the splendour of your succeeding prospects.

My age, and my infirmities still more than my age, make it probable that this will be the last time I shall have the honour of addressing you from this place. Excluded as I am, *spatiis iniquis*, from indulging my imagination with a distant and forward

perspective of life, I may be excused if I turn my eyes back on the way which I have passed.

We may assume to ourselves, I should hope, the credit of having endeavoured, at least, to fill with propriety that middle station which we hold in the general connection of things. Our predecessors have laboured for our advantage, we labour for our successors; and though we have done no more in this mutual intercourse and reciprocation of benefits, than has been effected by other societies formed in this nation for the advancement of useful and ornamental knowledge, yet there is one circumstance which appears to give us an higher claim than the credit of merely doing our duty. What I at present allude to, is the honour of having been, some of us, the first contrivers, and all of us the promoters and supporters, of the annual Exhibition. This scheme could only have originated from Artists already in possession of the favour of the publick; as it would not have been so much in the power of others to have

excited curiosity. It must be remembered, that for the sake of bringing forward into notice concealed merit, they incurred the risk of producing rivals to themselves; they voluntarily entered the lists, and ran the race a second time for the prize which they had already won.

When we take a review of the several departments of the Institution, I think we may safely congratulate ourselves on our good fortune in having hitherto seen the chairs of our Professors filled with men of distinguished abilities, and who have so well acquitted themselves of their duty in their several departments. I look upon it to be of importance, that none of them should be ever left unfilled: a neglect to provide for qualified persons, is to produce a neglect of qualifications.

In this honourable rank of Professors, I have not presumed to class myself; though in the Discourses which I have had the honour of delivering from this place, while in one respect I may be considered as a volun-

teer, in another view it seems as if I was involuntarily pressed into this service. If prizes were to be given, it appeared not only proper, but almost indispensably necessary, that something should be said by the President on the delivery of those prizes: and the President for his own credit would wish to say something more than mere words of compliment, which, by being frequently repeated, would soon become flat and uninteresting, and by being uttered to many, would at last become a distinction to none: I thought, therefore, if I were to preface this compliment with some instructive observations on the Art, when we crowned merit in the Artists whom we rewarded, I might do something to animate and guide them in their future attempts.

I am truly sensible how unequal I have been to the expression of my own ideas. To develope the latent excellencies, and draw out the interior principles, of our art, requires more skill and practice in writing, than is likely to be possessed by a man perpetually occupied in the use of the pencil

and the pallet. It is for that reason, perhaps, that the sister Art has had the advantage of better criticism. Poets are naturally writers of prose. They may be said to be practising only an inferior department of their own art, when they are explaining and expatiating upon its most refined principles. But still such difficulties ought not to deter Artists who are not prevented by other engagements, from putting their thoughts in order as well as they can, and from giving to the publick the result of their experience. The knowledge which an Artist has of his subject will more than compensate for any want of elegance in the manner of treating it, or even of perspicuity, which is still more essential; and I am convinced that one short essay written by a Painter, will contribute more to advance the theory of our art, than a thousand volumes such as we sometimes see; the purpose of which appears to be rather to display the refinement of the Author's own conceptions of impossible practice, than to convey useful knowledge or instruction of any kind whatever. An Artist knows what

is, and what is not, within the province of his art to perform; and is not likely to be for ever teazing the poor Student with the beauties of mixed passions, or to perplex him with an imaginary union of excellencies incompatible with each other.

To this work, however, I could not be said to come totally unprovided with materials. I had seen much, and I had thought much upon what I had seen; I had something of an habit of investigation, and a disposition to reduce all that I observed and felt in my own mind, to method and system; but never having seen what I myself knew, distinctly placed before me on paper, I knew nothing correctly. To put those ideas into something like order was, to my inexperience, no easy task. The composition, the *ponere totum* even of a single Discourse, as well as of a single statue, was the most difficult part, as perhaps it is of every other art, and most requires the hand of a master.

For the manner, whatever deficiency there

was I might reasonably expect indulgence; but I thought it indispensably necessary well to consider the opinions which were to be given out from this place, and under the sanction of a Royal Academy; I therefore examined not only my own opinions, but likewise the opinions of others. I found in the course of this research, many precepts and rules established in our art, which did not seem to me altogether reconcileable with each other, yet each seemed in itself to have the same claim of being supported by truth and nature; and this claim, irreconcileable as they may be thought, they do in reality alike possess.

To clear away those difficulties, and reconcile those contrary opinions, it became necessary to distinguish the greater truth, as it may be called, from the lesser truth; the larger and more liberal idea of nature from the more narrow and confined; that which addresses itself to the imagination, from that which is solely addressed to the eye. In consequence of this discrimination, the different branches of our art, to which those

different truths were referred, were perceived to make so wide a separation, and put on so new an appearance, that they seemed scarcely to have proceeded from the same general stock. The different rules and regulations, which presided over each department of art, followed of course: every mode of excellence, from the grand style of the Roman and Florentine Schools down to the lowest rank of still life, had its due weight and value,—fitted some class or other; and nothing was thrown away. By this disposition of our art into classes. that perplexity and confusion, which I apprehend every Artist has at some time experienced from the variety of styles, and the variety of excellence with which he is surrounded, is, I should hope, in some measure removed, and the Student better enabled to judge for himself, what peculiarly belongs to his own particular pursuit.

In reviewing my Discourses, it is no small satisfaction to be assured that I have, in no part of them, lent my assistance to foster *newly-hatched unfledged* opinions, or endea-

voured to support paradoxes, however tempting may have been their novelty; or however ingenious I might, for the minute, fancy them to be; nor shall I, I hope, any where be found to have imposed on the minds of young Students declamation for argument, a smooth period for a sound precept. I have pursued a plain and *honest method*; I have taken up the art simply as I found it exemplified in the practice of the most approved Painters. That approbation which the world has uniformly given, I have endeavoured to justify by such proofs as questions of this kind will admit; by the analogy which Painting holds with the sister Arts, and consequently by the common congeniality which they all bear to our nature. And though in what has been done no new discovery is pretended, I may still flatter myself, that from the discoveries which others have made by their own intuitive good sense and native rectitude of judgement, I have succeeded in establishing the rules and principles of our art on a more firm and lasting foundation than that on which they had formerly been placed.

Without wishing to divert the Student from the practice of his Art to speculative theory, to make him a mere Connoisseur instead of a Painter, I cannot but remark, that he will certainly find an account in considering once for all, on what ground the fabrick of our art is built. Uncertain, confused, or erroneous opinions are not only detrimental to an Artist in their immediate operation, but may possibly have very serious consequences; affect his conduct, and give a peculiar character (as it may be called) to his taste, and to his pursuits, through his whole life.

I was acquainted at Rome in the early part of my life, with a Student of the French Academy, who appeared to me to possess all the qualities requisite to make a great Artist, if he had suffered his taste and feelings, and I may add even his prejudices, to have fair play. He saw and felt the excellencies of the great works of Art with which we were surrounded, but lamented that there was not to be found that Nature which is so admirable in the inferior schools;

and he supposed with Felibien, Du Piles, and other Theorists, that such an union of different excellencies would be the perfection of Art. He was not aware, that the narrow idea of Nature, of which he lamented the absence in the works of those great Artists, would have destroyed the grandeur of the general ideas which he admired, and which was indeed the cause of his admiration. My opinions being then confused and unsettled, I was in danger of being borne down by this kind of plausible reasoning, though I remember I then had a dawning of suspicion that it was not sound doctrine; and at the same time I was unwilling obstinately to refuse assent to what I was unable to confute.

That the young Artist may not be seduced from the right path, by following, what, at first view, he may think the light of Reason, and which is indeed Reason in part, but not in the whole, has been much the object of these Discourses.

I have taken every opportunity of recommending a rational method of study, as of

the last importance. The great, I may say the sole, use of an Academy is, to put, and for some time to keep, Students in that course, that too much indulgence may not be given to peculiarity, and that a young man may not be taught to believe, that what is generally good for others is not good for him.

I have strongly inculcated in my former Discourses, as I do in this my last, the wisdom and necessity of previously obtaining the appropriated instruments of the Art, in a first correct design, and a plain manly colouring before any thing more is attempted. But by this I would not wish to cramp and fetter the mind, or discourage those who follow (as most of us may at one time have followed) the suggestion of a strong inclination: something must be conceded to great and irresistible impulses: perhaps every Student must not be strictly bound to general methods, if they strongly thwart the peculiar turn of his own mind. I must confess that it is not absolutely of much consequence, whether he proceeds in the general method of seeking first to acquire mechanical accu-

racy, before he attempts poetical flights, provided he diligently studies to attain the full perfection of the style he pursues; whether like Parmegiano, he endeavours at grace and grandeur of manner before he has learned correctness of drawing, if like him he feels his own wants, and will labour, as that eminent artist did, to supply those wants; whether he starts from the East or from the West, if he relaxes in no exertion to arrive ultimately at the same goal. The first publick work of Parmegiano is the St. Eustachius, in the church of St. Petronius in Bologna, and was done when he was a boy; and one of the last of his works is the Moses breaking the tables, in Parma. In the former there is certainly something of grandeur in the outline, or in the conception of the figure, which discovers the dawnings of future greatness; of a young mind impregnated with the sublimity of Michael Angelo, whose style he here attempts to imitate, though he could not then draw the human figure with any common degree of correctness. But this same Parmegiano, when in his more mature age he painted the Moses, had so completely

supplied his first defects, that we are here at a loss which to admire most, the correctness of drawing, or the grandeur of the conception. As a confirmation of its great excellence, and of the impression which it leaves on the minds of elegant spectators, I may observe, that our great Lyrick Poet, when he conceived his sublime idea of the indignant Welsh bard, acknowledged, that though many years had intervened, he had warmed his imagination with the remembrance of this noble figure of Parmegiano.

When we consider that Michael Angelo was the great archetype to whom Parmegiano was indebted for that grandeur which we find in his works, and from whom all his contemporaries and successors have derived whatever they have possessed of the dignified and the majestick; that he was the bright luminary, from whom Painting has borrowed a new lustre; that under his hands it assumed a new appearance, and is become another and superior art; I may be excused if I take this opportunity, as I have hitherto taken every occasion, to turn your attention to this

exalted Founder and Father of Modern Art, of which he was not only the inventor, but which, by the divine energy of his own mind, he carried at once to its highest point of possible perfection.

The sudden maturity to which Michael Angelo brought our Art, and the comparative feebleness of his followers and imitators, might perhaps be reasonably, at least plausibly explained, if we had time for such an examination. At present I shall only observe, that the subordinate parts of our Art, and perhaps of other Arts, expand themselves by a slow and progressive growth; but those which depend on a native vigour of imagination generally burst forth at once in fulness of beauty. Of this Homer probably, and Shakspeare more assuredly, are signal examples. Michael Angelo possessed the poetical part of our art in a most eminent degree: and the same daring spirit, which urged him first to explore the unknown regions of the imagination, delighted with the novelty, and animated by the success of his discoveries, could

not have failed to stimulate and impel him forward in his career beyond those limits, which his followers, destitute of the same incentives had not strength to pass.

To distinguish between correctness of drawing, and that part which respects the imagination, we may say the one approaches to the mechanical (which in its way too may make just pretensions to genius) and the other to the poetical. To encourage a solid and vigorous course of study, it may not be amiss to suggest, that perhaps a confidence in the mechanick produces a boldness in the poetick. He that is sure of the goodness of his ship and tackle puts out fearlessly from the shore; and he who knows that his hand can execute whatever his fancy can suggest, sports with more freedom in embodying the visionary forms of his own creation. I will not say Michael Angelo was eminently poetical, only because he was greatly mechanical; but I am sure that mechanick excellence invigorated and emboldened his mind to carry painting into the regions of poetry, and to emulate that art in

its most adventurous flights. Michael Angelo equally possessed both qualifications. Yet of mechanick excellence there were certainly great examples to be found in Ancient Sculpture, and particularly in the fragment known by the name of the Torso of Michael Angelo; but of that grandeur of character, air, and attitude, which he threw into all his figures, and which so well corresponds with the grandeur of his outline, there was no example; it could therefore proceed only from the most poetical and sublime imagination.

It is impossible not to express some surprise, that the race of Painters who preceded Michael Angelo, men of acknowledged great abilities, should never have thought of transferring a little of that grandeur of outline which they could not but see and admire in Ancient Sculpture, into their own works; but they appear to have considered Sculpture as the later Schools of Artists look at the inventions of Michael Angelo,—as something to be admired, but with which they have nothing to do: *quod super nos, nihil ad*

*nos*.—The Artists of that age, even Raffaelle himself, seemed to be going on very contentedly in the dry manner of Pietro Perugino; and if Michael Angelo had never appeared, the Art might still have continued in the same style.

Beside Rome and Florence, where the grandeur of this style was first displayed, it was on this Foundation that the Caracci built the truly great Academical Bolognian school, of which the first stone was laid by Pellegrino Tibaldi. He first introduced this style amongst them; and many instances might be given in which he appears to have possessed as by inheritance, the true, genuine, noble and elevated mind of Michael Angelo. Though we cannot venture to speak of him with the same fondness as his countrymen, and call him, as the Caracci did, *Nostro Michael Angelo riformato*, yet he has a right to be considered amongst the first and greatest of his followers: there are certainly many drawings and inventions of his, of which Michael Angelo himself might not disdain to be supposed

the author, or that they should be, as in fact they often are, mistaken for his. I will mention one particular instance, because it is found in a book which is in every young Artist's hand;—Bishop's Ancient Statues. He there has introduced a print, representing Polyphemus, from a drawing of Tibaldi, and has inscribed it with the name of Michael Angelo, to whom he has also in the same book attributed a Sybil of Raffaelle. Both these figures, it is true, are professedly in Michael Angelo's style and spirit, and even worthy of his hand. But we know that the former is painted in the *Institute a Bologna* by Tibaldi, and the other in the *Pace* by Raffaelle.

The Caracci, it is acknowledged, adopted the mechanical part with sufficient success. But the divine part which addresses itself to the imagination, as possessed by Michael Angelo or Tibaldi, was beyond their grasp: they formed however, a most respectable school, a style more on the level, and calculated to please a greater number; and if excellence of this kind is to be valued

according to the number, rather than the weight and quality of admirers, it would assume even a higher rank in Art. The same, in some sort, may be said of Tintoret, Paolo Veronese, and others of the Venetian Painters. They certainly much advanced the dignity of their style by adding to their fascinating powers of colouring something of the strength of Michael Angelo; at the same time it may still be a doubt, how far their ornamental elegance would be an advantageous addition to his grandeur. But if there is any manner of Painting which may be said to unite kindly with his style, it is that of Titian. His handling, the manner in which his colours are left on the canvass, appears to proceed (as far as that goes) from a congenial mind, equally disdainful of vulgar criticism.

MICHAEL ANGELO'S strength thus qualified, and made more palatable to the general taste, reminds me of an observation which I heard a learned critick* make, when it was incidentally remarked, that our translation of Homer, however excellent, did not convey

* Dr. Johnson.

the character, nor had the grand air of the original. He replied, that if Pope had not cloathed the naked Majesty of Homer, with the graces and elegancies of modern fashions, —though the real dignity of Homer was degraded by such a dress, his translation would not have met with such a favourable reception, and he must have been contented with fewer readers.

Many of the Flemish painters, who studied at Rome in that great era of our art, such as Francis Rloris, Hemskerk, Michael Coxis, Jerom Cock, and others, returned to their own country with as much of this grandeur as they could carry. But like seeds falling on a soil not prepared or adapted to their nature, the manner of Michael Angelo thrived but little with them; perhaps, however, they contributed to prepare the way for that free, unconstrained, and liberal outline, which was afterwards introduced by Rubens, through the medium of the Venetian Painters.

The grandeur of style has been in dif-

ferent degrees disseminated over all Europe. Some caught it by living at the time, and coming into contact with the original author, whilst others received it at second hand; and being every where adopted, it has totally changed the whole taste and style of design, if there could be said to be any style before his time. Our art, in consequence, now assumes a rank to which it could never have dared to aspire, if Michael Angelo had not discovered to the world the hidden powers which it possessed. Without his assistance we never could have been convinced, that Painting was capable of producing an adequate representation of the persons and actions of the heroes of the Iliad.

I would ask any man qualified to judge of such works, whether he can look with indifference at the personification of the Supreme Being in the centre of the Capella Sestina, or the figures of the Sybils which surround that chapel, to which we may add the statue of Moses; and whether the same sensations are not excited by those works, as what he may remember to have felt from the most

sublime passages of Homer? I mention those figures more particularly, as they come nearer to a comparison with his Jupiter, his demi-gods, and heroes; those Sybils and Prophets being a kind of intermediate beings between men and angels. Though instances may be produced in the works of other Painters, which may justly stand in competition with those I have mentioned, such as the Isaiah, and the vision of Ezekiel, by Raffaelle, the St. Mark of Frate Bartolomeo, and many others; yet these, it must be allowed, are inventions so much in Michael Angelo's manner of thinking, that they may be truly considered as so many rays, which discover manifestly the centre from whence they emanated.

The sublime in Painting, as in Poetry, so overpowers, and takes such a possession of the whole mind, that no room is left for attention to minute criticism. The little elegancies of art in the presence of these great ideas thus greatly expressed, lose all their value, and are, for the instant at least, felt to be unworthy of our notice. The

correct judgement, the purity of taste, which characterise Raffaelle, the exquisite grace of Correggio and Parmegiano, all disappear before them.

That Michael Angelo was capricious in his inventions, cannot be denied; and this may make some circumspection necessary in studying his works; for though they appear to become him, an imitation of them is always dangerous, and will prove sometimes ridiculous. "Within that circle none durst walk but he." To me, I confess his caprice does not lower the estimation of his genius, even though it is sometimes I acknowledge, carried to the extreme: and however those eccentrick excursions are considered, we must at the same time recollect that those faults, if they are faults, are such as never could occur to a mean and vulgar mind; that they flowed from the same source which produced his greatest beauties, and were therefore such as none but himself was capable of committing: they were the powerful impulses of a mind unused to subjection of

any kind, and too high to be controlled by cold criticism.

Many see his daring extravagance, who can see nothing else. A young Artist finds the works of Michael Angelo so totally different from those of his own master, or of those with whom he is surrounded, that he may be easily persuaded to abandon and neglect studying a style, which appears to him wild, mysterious, and above his comprehension, and which he therefore feels no disposition to admire; a good disposition, which he concludes that he should naturally have, if the style deserved it. It is necessary therefore, that students should be prepared for the disappointment which they may experience at their first setting out; and they must be cautioned, that probably they will not, at first sight, approve.

It must be remembered, that this great style itself is artificial in the highest degree, it presupposes in the spectator, a cultivated and prepared artificial state of mind. It is an absurdity therefore, to suppose that

we are born with this taste, though we are with the seeds of it, which, by the heat and kindly influence of his genius, may be ripened in us.

A late Philosopher and Critick * has observed, speaking of taste, that *we are on no account to expect that fine things should descend to us*—our taste, if possible, must be made to ascend to them. The same learned writer recommends to us *even to feign a relish, till we find a relish come; and feel, that what began in fiction, terminates in reality.* If there be in our Art any thing of that agreement or compact, such as I apprehend there is in musick, with which the Critick is necessarily required previously to be acquainted, in order to form a correct judgement: the comparison with this art will illustrate what I have said on these points, and tend to show the probability, we may say the certainty, that men are not born with a relish for those arts in their most refined state, which as they cannot understand, they cannot be impressed with

* James Harris, Esq. R.

their effects. This great style of Michael Angelo is as far removed from the simple representation of the common objects of nature, as the most refined Italian musick is from the inartificial notes of nature, from whence they both profess to originate. But without such a supposed compact, we may be very confident that the highest state of refinement in either of those arts will not be relished without a long and industrious attention.

In pursuing this great Art, it must be acknowledged that we labour under greater difficulties than those who were born in the age of its discovery, and whose minds from their infancy were habituated to this style; who learnt it as language, as their mother tongue. They had no mean taste to unlearn; they needed no persuasive discourse to allure them to a favourable reception of it, no abstruse investigation of its principles to convince them of the great latent truths on which it is founded. We are constrained, in these latter days, to have recourse to a sort of Grammar and Dictionary, as the

only means of recovering a dead language. It was by them learned by rote, and perhaps better learned that way than by precept.

The style of Michael Angelo, which I have compared to language, and which may, poetically speaking, be called the language of the Gods, now no longer exists, as it did in the fifteenth century; yet, with the aid of diligence, we may in a great measure supply the deficiency which I mentioned, —of not having his works so perpetually before our eyes,—by having recourse to casts from his models and designs in Sculpture; to drawings or even copies of those drawings; to prints, which, however ill executed, still convey something by which this taste may be formed, and a relish may be fixed and established in our minds for this grand style of invention. Some examples of this kind we have in the Academy; and I sincerely wish there were more, that the younger Students might in their first nourishment imbibe this taste; whilst others, though settled in the practice of the common-place style of

Painters, might infuse, by this means, a grandeur into their works.

I shall now make some remarks on the course which I think most proper to be pursued in such a study. I wish you not to go so much to the derivative streams, as to the fountain-head; though the copies are not to be neglected; because they may give you hints in what manner you may copy, and how the genius of one man may be made to fit the peculiar manner of another.

To recover this lost taste, I would recommend young Artists to study the works of Michael Angelo, as he himself did the works of the ancient Sculptors; he began when a child, a copy of a mutilated Satyr's head, and finished in his model what was wanting in the original. In the same manner, the first exercise that I would recommend to the young artist when he first attempts invention, is, to select every figure, if possible, from the inventions of Michael Angelo. If such borrowed figures will not bend to his

purpose, and he is constrained to make a change to supply a figure himself, that figure will necessarily be in the same style with the rest; and his taste will by this means be naturally initiated, and nursed in the lap of grandeur. He will sooner perceive what constitutes this grand style by one practical trial than by a thousand speculations, and he will in some sort procure to himself that advantage which in these later ages has been denied him; the advantage of having the greatest of Artists for his master and instructor.

The next lesson should be, to change the purpose of the figures without changing the attitude, as Tintoret has done with the Sampson of Michael Angelo. Instead of the figure which Sampson bestrides, he has placed an eagle under him; and instead of the jaw-bone, thunder and lightning in his right hand; and thus it becomes a Jupiter. Titian, in the same manner, has taken the figure which represents God dividing the light from the darkness in the vault of the Capella Sestina, and has introduced it in the

famous battle of Cadore, so much celebrated by Vasari; and extraordinary as it may seem, it is here converted to a general, falling from his horse. A real judge who should look at this picture, would immediately pronounce the attitude of that figure to be in a greater style than any other figure of the composition. These two instances may be sufficient, though many more might be given in their works, as well as in those of other great Artists.

When the Student has been habituated to this grand conception of the Art, when the relish for this style is established, makes a part of himself, and is woven into his mind, he will, by this time, have got a power of selecting from whatever occurs in nature that is grand, and corresponds with that taste which he has now acquired; and will pass over whatever is common-place, and insipid. He may then bring to the mart such works of his own proper invention as may enrich and increase the general stock of invention in our Art.

I am confident of the truth and propriety of the advice which I have recommended; at the same time I am aware, how much by this advice I have laid myself open to the sarcasms of those criticks who imagine our Art to be a matter of inspiration. But I should be sorry it should appear even to myself that I wanted that courage which I have recommended to the Students in another way: equal courage perhaps is required in the adviser and the advised; they both must equally dare and bid defiance to narrow criticism and vulgar opinion.

That the Art has been in a gradual state of decline, from the age of Michael Angelo to the present, must be acknowledged; and we may reasonably impute this declension to the same cause to which the ancient Criticks and Philosophers have imputed the corruption of eloquence. Indeed the same causes are likely at all times and in all ages to produce the same effects: indolence,—not taking the same pains as our great predecessors took,—desiring to find a shorter way,—are the general imputed causes. The words of

Petronius * are very remarkable. After opposing the natural chaste beauty of the eloquence of former ages to the strained inflated style then in fashion, "neither," says he, "has the Art in Painting had a better fate, "after the boldness of the Egyptians had "found out a compendious way to execute "so great an art."

By *compendious*, I understand him to mean a mode of Painting, such as has infected the style of the later Painters of Italy and France; common-place, without thought, and with as little trouble, working as by a receipt; in contra-distinction to that style for which even a relish cannot be acquired without care and long attention, and most certainly the power of executing cannot be obtained without the most laborious application.

I have endeavoured to stimulate the ambition of Artists to tread in this great path

* Pictura quoque non alium exitum fecit, postquam Ægyptiorum audacia tam magnæ artis compendiariam invenit. R.

of glory, and, as well as I can, have pointed out the track which leads to it, and have at the same time told them the price at which it may be obtained. It is an ancient saying, that labour is the price which the Gods have set upon every thing valuable.

The great Artist who has been so much the subject of the present Discourse, was distinguished even from his infancy for his indefatigable diligence; and this was continued through his whole life, till prevented by extreme old age. The poorest of men, as he observed himself, did not labour from necessity, more than he did from choice. Indeed, from all the circumstances related of his life, he appears not to have had the least conception that his art was to be acquired by any other means than great labour; and yet he, of all men that ever lived, might make the greatest pretensions to the efficacy of native genius and inspiration. I have no doubt that he would have thought it no disgrace, that it should be said of him, as he himself said of Raffaelle, that he did not possess his art from

nature, but by long study*. He was conscious that the great excellence to which he arrived was gained by dint of labour, and was unwilling to have it thought that any transcendent skill, however natural its effects might seem, could be purchased at a cheaper price than he had paid for it. This seems to have been the true drift of his observation. We cannot suppose it made with any intention of depreciating the genius of Raffaelle, of whom he always spoke, as Condivi says, with the greatest respect: though they were rivals, no such illiberality existed between them; and Raffaelle on his part entertained the greatest veneration for Michael Angelo, as appears from the speech which is recorded of him, that he congratulated himself, and thanked God, that he was born in the same age with that painter.

If the high esteem and veneration in which Michael Angelo has been held by all nations and in all ages, should be put to the account of prejudice, it must still be granted that

* *Che Raffaelle non ebbe quest' arte da natura, ma per longo studio. R.*

those prejudices could not have been entertained without a cause: the ground of our prejudice then becomes the source of our admiration. But from whatever it proceeds, or whatever it is called, it will not I hope, be thought presumptuous in me to appear in the train, I cannot say of his imitators, but of his admirers. I have taken another course, one more suited to my abilities, and to the taste of the times in which I live. Yet however unequal I feel myself to that attempt, were I now to begin the world again, I would tread in the steps of that great master: to kiss the hem of his garment, to catch the slightest of his perfections, would be glory and distinction enough for an ambitious man.

I feel a self-congratulation in knowing myself capable of such sensations as he intended to excite. I reflect, not without vanity, that these Discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and

from this place, might be the name of—MICHAEL ANGELO*.

* Unfortunately for mankind, these *were* the last words pronounced by this great Painter from the Academical chair. He died about fourteen months after this Discourse was delivered. M.

THE END OF THE DISCOURSES.

# THREE LETTERS

TO

# THE IDLER.

# THE IDLER.

NUMB. 76. *Saturday, September* 29, 1759.

## TO THE IDLER.

SIR,

I WAS much pleased with your ridicule of those shallow Criticks, whose judgement, though often right as far as it goes, yet reaches only to inferior beauties; and who, unable to comprehend the whole, judge only by parts, and from thence determine the merit of extensive works. But there is another kind of Critick still worse, who judges by narrow rules, and those too often false, and which though they should be true, and founded on nature, will lead him but a very little way towards the just estimation of the sublime beauties in works of Genius; for whatever part of an art can be executed or criticised by rules, that part is no longer the

work of Genius, which implies excellence out of the reach of rules. For my own part, I profess myself an Idler, and love to give my judgement, such as it is, from my immediate perceptions, without much fatigue of thinking; and I am of opinion, that if a man has not those perceptions right, it will be vain for him to endeavour to supply their place by rules; which may enable him to talk more learnedly, but not to distinguish more acutely. Another reason which has lessened my affection for the study of Criticism is, that Criticks, so far as I have observed, debar themselves from receiving any pleasure from the polite arts, at the same time that they profess to love and admire them: for these rules being always uppermost, give them such a propensity to criticize, that instead of giving up the reins of their imagination into their author's hands, their frigid minds are employed in examining whether the performance be according to the rules of art.

To those who are resolved to be Criticks in spite of nature, and at the same time have

no great disposition to much reading and study, I would recommend to assume the character of Connoisseur, which may be purchased at a much cheaper rate than that of a Critick in poetry. The remembrance of a few names of Painters, with their general characters, and a few rules of the Academy, which they may pick up among the Painters, will go a great way towards making a very notable Connoisseur.

With a Gentleman of this cast, I visited last week the Cartoons at Hampton-Court; he was just returned from Italy, a Connoisseur, of course, and of course his mouth full of nothing but the Grace of Raffaelle, the Purity of Domenichino, the Learning of Poussin, the Air of Guido, the greatness of Taste of the Caraccis, and the Sublimity and grand Contorno of Michael Angelo; with all the rest of the cant of Criticism, which he emitted with that volubility which generally those orators have, who annex no ideas to their words.

As we were passing through the rooms,

in our way to the Gallery, I made him observe a whole length of Charles the first, by Vandyck, as a perfect representation of the character as well as the figure of the man: He agreed it was very fine, but it wanted spirit and contrast, and had not the flowing line, without which a figure could not possibly be graceful. When we entered the Gallery, I thought I could perceive him recollecting his Rules by which he was to criticise Raffaelle. I shall pass over his observation of the boats being too little, and other criticisms of that kind, till we arrived at St. *Paul preaching*. "This, says he, is esteemed the most excellent of all the Cartoons: what nobleness, what dignity there is in that figure of St. Paul! and yet what an addition to that nobleness could Raffaelle have given, had the art of Contrast been known in his time; but above all, the flowing line, which constitutes Grace and Beauty. You would not then have seen an upright figure standing equally on both legs, and both hands stretched forward in the same direction, and his drapery, to all appearance, without the least art of dispo-

sition." The following Picture is the *Charge to Peter*. "Here, says he, are twelve upright figures; what a pity it is that Raffaelle was not acquainted with the pyramidal principle; he would then have contrived the figures in the middle to have been on higher ground, or the figures at the extremities stooping or lying; which would not only have formed the group into the shape of a pyramid, but likewise contrasted the standing figures. Indeed, added he, I have often lamented that so great a genius as Raffaelle had not lived in this enlightened age, since the art has been reduced to principles, and had his education in one of the modern Academies; what glorious works might we then have expected from his divine pencil!"

I shall trouble you no longer with my friend's observations, which, I suppose, you are now able to continue by yourself. It is curious to observe, that at the same time that great admiration is pretended for a name of fixed reputation, objections are raised

against those very qualities by which that great name was acquired.

These Criticks are continually lamenting that Raffaelle had not the Colouring and Harmony of Rubens, or the Light and Shadow of Rembrandt, without considering how much the gay harmony of the former, and affectation of the latter, would take from the Dignity of Raffaelle: and yet Rubens had great Harmony, and Rembrandt understood Light and Shadow; but what may be an excellence in a lower class of Painting, becomes a blemish in a higher; as the quick, sprightly turn, which is the life and beauty of epigrammatick compositions, would but ill suit with the majesty of heroick Poetry.

To conclude; I would not be thought to infer from any thing that has been said, that Rules are absolutely unnecessary, but to censure scrupulosity, a servile attention to minute exactness, which is sometimes inconsistent with higher excellence, and is lost in the blaze of expanded genius.

I do not know whether you will think Painting, a general subject. By inserting this letter, perhaps you will incur the censure a man would deserve, whose business being to entertain a whole room, should turn his back on the company, and talk to a particular person.

I am, Sir, &c.

NUMB. 79. *Saturday, October* 20, 1759.

## TO THE IDLER.

SIR,

YOUR acceptance of a former letter on Painting, gives me encouragement to offer a few more sketches on the same subject.

Amongst the Painters and the writers on Painting, there is one maxim universally admitted and continually inculcated. *Imitate Nature*, is the invariable rule; but I know none who have explained in what manner this rule is to be understood; the consequence of which is, that every one takes it in the most obvious sense,—that objects are represented naturally, when they have such relief that they seem real. It may appear strange, perhaps, to hear this sense of the rule disputed; but it must be considered, that if the excellency of a Painter consisted only in this kind of imitation,

Painting must lose its rank, and be no longer considered as a liberal art, and sister to Poetry; this imitation being merely mechanical, in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best; for the Painter of genius cannot stoop to drudgery, in which the understanding has no part; and what pretence has the art to claim kindred with Poetry, but by its power over the imagination? To this power the Painter of genius directs his aim; in this sense he studies Nature, and often arrives at his end, even by being unnatural, in the confined sense of the word.

The grand style of Painting requires this minute attention to be carefully avoided, and must be kept as separate from it as the style of Poetry from that of History. Poetical ornaments destroy that air of truth and plainness which ought to characterise History; but the very being of Poetry consists in departing from this plain narration, and adopting every ornament that will warm the imagination. To desire to see the excellencies of each style united, to mingle the

Dutch with the Italian School, is to join contrarieties which cannot subsist together, and which destroy the efficacy of each other. The Italian attends only to the invariable, the great, and general ideas which are fixed and inherent in universal Nature; the Dutch, on the contrary, to literal truth and a minute exactness in the detail, as I may say, of Nature modified by accident, The attention to these petty peculiarities is the very cause of this naturalness so much admired in the Dutch pictures, which, if we suppose it to be a beauty, is certainly of a lower order, that ought to give place to a beauty of a superior kind, since one cannot be obtained but by departing from the other.

If my opinion were asked concerning the works of Michael Angelo, whether they would receive any advantage from possessing this mechanical merit, I should not scruple to say, they would lose, in a great measure, the effect which they now have on every mind susceptible of great and noble ideas. His works may be said to be all genius, and soul; and why should they be loaded with

heavy matter, which can only counteract his purpose by retarding the progress of the imagination?

If this opinion should be thought one of the wild extravagances of enthusiasm, I shall only say, that those who censure it are not conversant in the works of the great Masters. It is very difficult to determine the exact degree of enthusiasm that the arts of Painting and Poetry may admit. There may perhaps be too great an indulgence, as well as too great a restraint of imagination; and if the one produces incoherent monsters, the other produces what is full as bad, lifeless insipidity. An intimate knowledge of the passions, and good sense, but not common sense, must at last determine its limits. It has been thought, and I believe with reason, that Michael Angelo sometimes transgressed those limits; and I think I have seen figures by him, of which it was very difficult to determine, whether they were in the highest degree sublime or extremely ridiculous. Such faults may be said to be the ebullition, of Genius; but at least he had this merit,

that he never was insipid; and whatever passion his works may excite, they will always escape contempt.

What I have had under consideration is the sublimest style, particularly that of Michael Angelo, the Homer of Painting. Other kinds may admit of this naturalness, which of the lowest kind is the chief merit; but in Painting, as in Poetry, the highest style has the least of common nature.

One may safely recommend a little more enthusiasm to the modern Painters; too much is certainly not the vice of the present age. The Italians seem to have been continually declining in this respect from the time of Michael Angelo to that of Carlo Maratti, and from thence to the very pathos of insipidity to which they are now sunk; so that there is no need of remarking, that where I mentioned the Italian Painters in opposition to the Dutch, I mean not the moderns, but the heads of the old Roman and Bolognian Schools; nor did I mean to include in my idea of an Italian Painter, the Venetian

School, which may be said to be the Dutch part of the Italian Genius. I have only to add a word of advice to the Painters,—that however excellent they may be in Painting naturally, they would not flatter themselves very much upon it; and to the Connoisseurs, that when they see a cat or a fiddle painted so finely, that as the phrase is, *it looks as if you could take it up*, they would not for that reason immediately compare the Painter to Raffaelle and Michael Angelo.

NUMB. 82. *Saturday, November* 10, 1759.

## TO THE IDLER.

SIR,

DISCOURSING in my last letter on the different practice of the Italian and Dutch Painters, I observed that "the Italian Painter attends only to the invariable, the great, and general ideas, which are fixed and inherent in universal nature."

I was led into the subject of this letter by endeavouring to fix the original cause of this conduct of the Italian Masters. If it can be proved that by this choice they selected the most beautiful part of the creation, it will show how much their principles are founded on reason, and, at the same time, discover the origin of our ideas of beauty.

I suppose it will be easily granted, that no

man can judge whether any animal be beautiful in its kind, or deformed, who has seen only one of that species; this is as conclusive in regard to the human figure; so that if a man, born blind, were to recover his sight, and the most beautiful woman were brought before him, he could not determine whether she was handsome or not; nor if the most beautiful and most deformed were produced, could he any better determine to which he should give the preference, having seen only those two. To distinguish beauty, then, implies the having seen many individuals of that species. If it is asked, how is more skill acquired by the observation of greater numbers? I answer, that, in consequence of having seen many, the power is acquired, even without seeking after it, of distinguishing between accidental blemishes and excrescences which are continually varying the surface of nature's works, and the invariable general form which Nature most frequently produces, and always seems to intend in her productions.

Thus amongst the blades of grass or leaves of the same tree, though no two can be found exactly alike, the general form is invariable : a Naturalist, before he chose one as a sample, would examine many ; since if he took the first that occurred, it might have, by accident or otherwise, such a form as that it would scarce be known to belong to that species ; he selects as the Painter does, the most beautiful, that is, the most general form of nature.

Every species of the animal as well as the vegetable creation may be said to have a fixed or determinate form, towards which Nature is continually inclining, like various lines terminating in the centre ; or it may be compared to pendulums vibrating in different directions over one central point : and as they all cross the centre, though only one passes through any other point, so it will be found that perfect beauty is oftener produced by nature than deformity ; I do not mean than deformity in general, but than any one kind of deformity. To instance in a particular part of a feature ; the line that forms a ridge

of the nose is beautiful when it is straight; this then is the central form, which is oftener found than either concave, convex, or any other irregular form that shall be proposed. As we are then more accustomed to beauty than deformity, we may conclude that to be the reason why we approve and admire it, as we approve and admire customs and fashions of dress for no other reason than that we are used to them; so that though habit and custom cannot be said to be the cause of beauty, it is certainly the cause of our liking it: and I have no doubt but that if we were more used to deformity than beauty, deformity would then lose the idea now annexed to it, and take that of beauty: as if the whole world should agree, that *yes* and *no* should change their meaning; *yes* would then deny, and *no* would affirm.

Whoever undertakes to proceed further in this argument, and endeavours to fix a general criterion of beauty respecting different species, or to show why one species is more beautiful than another, it will be required from him

first to prove that one species is really more beautiful than another. That we prefer one to the other, and with very good reason, will be readily granted; but it does not follow from thence that we think it a more beautiful form; for we have no criterion of form by which to determine our judgement. He who says a swan is more beautiful than a dove, means little more than that he has more pleasure in seeing a swan than a dove, either from the stateliness of its motions, or its being a more rare bird; and he who gives the preference to the dove, does it from some association of ideas of innocence which he always annexes to the dove; but if he pretends to defend the preference he gives to one or the other by endeavouring to prove that this more beautiful form proceeds from a particular gradation of magnitude, undulation of a curve, or direction of a line, or whatever other conceit of his imagination he shall fix on, as a criterion of form, he will be continually contradicting himself, and find at last that the great Mother of Nature will not be subjected to such narrow rules. Among the various reasons why we prefer one part of

her works to another, the most general, I believe, is habit and custom; custom makes, in a certain sense, white black, and black white; it is custom alone determines our preference of the colour of the Europeans to the Ethiopians, and they, for the same reason, prefer their own colour to ours. I suppose no body will doubt, if one of their Painters were to paint the Goddess of Beauty, but that he would represent her black, with thick lips flat nose, and woolly hair; and, it seems to me, he would act very unnaturally if he did not: for by what criterion will any one dispute the propriety of his idea! We, indeed say, that the form and colour of the European is preferable to that of the Ethiopian; but I know of no other reason we have for it, but that we are more accustomed to it. It is absurd to say, that beauty is possessed of attractive powers, which irresistibly seize the corresponding mind with love and admiration, since that argument is equally conclusive in favour of the white and the black philosophers.

The black and white nations must, in

respect of beauty, b econsidered as of different kinds, at least a different species of the same kind; from one of which to the other, as I observed, no inference can be drawn.

Novelty is said to be one of the causes of beauty. That novelty is a very sufficient reason why we should admire, is not denied; but because it is uncommon, it is therefore beautiful? The beauty that is produced by colour, as when we prefer one bird to another though of the same form, on account of its colour, has nothing to do with the argument which reaches only to form. I have here onsidered the word Beauty as being properly applied to form alone. There is a necessity of fixing this confined sense; for there can be no argument, if the sense of the word is extended to every thing that is approved. A rose may as well be said to be beautiful, because it has a fine smell, as a bird because of its colour. When we apply the word Beauty, we do not mean always by it a more beautiful form, but something valuable on account of its rarity, usefulness, colour, or

any other property. A horse is said to be a beautiful animal; but had a horse as few good qualities as a tortoise, I do not imagine that he would then be deemed beautiful.

A fitness to the end proposed, is said to be another cause of beauty; but supposing we were proper judges of what form is the most proper in an animal to constitute strength or swiftness, we always determine concerning its beauty, before we exert our understanding to judge of his fitness.

From what has been said, it may be inferred, that the works of Nature, if we compare one species with another, are all equally beautiful, and that preference is given from custom or some association of ideas: and that, in creatures of the same species, beauty is the medium or centre of all its various forms.

To conclude, then, by way of corollary: if it has been proved that the Painter, by attending to the invariable and general ideas

of Nature, produce beauty, he must, by regarding minute particularities, and accidental discriminations, deviate from the universal rule, and pollute his canvass with deformity.

A

# JOURNEY

TO

# FLANDERS AND HOLLAND,

IN THE YEAR MDCCLXXXI.

A

# JOURNEY

TO

# FLANDERS AND HOLLAND,

IN THE YEAR MDCCLXXXI.*

AT Ostend, where we landed, July 27, 1781, there are no pictures, and even Bruges affords but a scanty entertainment to a Painter: however, there are a few, which, though not of the

* Our author, accompanied by Philip Metcalfe, Esq. left London on Tuesday, July 24, 1781, went to Margate, and embarked there for Ostend; proceeded from thence to Ghent, Brussels, Antwerp; Dort, the Hague, Leyden, Amsterdam, Dusseldorp, Aix-la-chapelle, Liege; returned to Brussels again, from thence to Ostend; landed at Margate, and arrived in London Sunday, Sept. 16.

To Mr. Metcalfe he intended to have dedicated his account of this Tour, but he had only written the following introductory paragraphs:

"I send you, put together in as much order has

first rank, may be worth the attention of a traveller who has time to spare.

the little time I can spare from my business will permit, the Notes that I made abroad on the pictures that we saw together, I present them to you as properly your due; for if I had been accompanied by a person of less taste, or less politeness, they probably would not have been made. The pleasure that a mere *dilettante* derives from seeing the works of art, ceases when he has received the full effect of each performance; but the Painter has the means of amusing himself much longer, by investigating the principles on which the Artists wrought. To whichever of your good qualities I am to attribute your long and patient attendance, while I was employed in examining the various works which we saw, it merits my warmest acknowledgements. Nor is it an inconsiderable advantage to see such works in company with one, who has a general rectitude of taste, and is not a professor of the art. We are too apt to forget that the art is not intended solely for the pleasure of professors. The opinions of others are certainly not to be neglected; since by their means the received rules of art may be corrected; at least a species of benefit may be obtained, which we are not likely to derive from the judgement of painters, who being educated in the same manner, are likely to judge from the same principles, are liable to the same prejudices, and may sometimes be governed by the influence of an authority which perhaps has no foundation in nature." M.

## BRUGES.

SEGERS.

In the Cathedral.—The high altar; the Adoration of the Magi, by Segers. This picture is justly considered as one of the best of that painter's works. The part which first obtrudes itself on your attention is one of the kings, who is placed in the front: this figure, notwithstanding its great fame, and its acknowledged excellence in many respects, has one great defect; it appears to have nothing to do with the rest of the composition, and has too much the air of a whole-length portrait. What gives it so much this appearance is, the eyes looking out of the picture; that is, he is looking at the person who looks at the picture. This always has a bad effect, and ought never to be practised in a grave historical composition, however successfully it may be admitted in ludicrous subjects, where no business of any kind, that requires eagerness of attention, is going forward.

Bruges. Otho venius. The second altar on the right from the door is the Nativity, by Otho Venius. Many parts of this picture bring to mind the manner of Rubens, particularly the colouring of the arm of one of the shepherds: but in comparison of Rubens it is but a lame performance, and would not be worth mentioning here, but from its being the work of a man who had the honour to be the master of Rubens.

Otho Venius published two books of Emblems, explained by prints of children: it was from him Rubens imbibed that predilection in favour of emblematical representation which has afforded so much subject for criticism; particularly his introducing them in the Luxemburgh gallery.

John Van Eyck. In the sacristy is a picture, painted by John Van Eyck, of the Virgin and Child, with St. George and other Saints; one of those figures which is dressed in white, and which undoubt-

edly was taken from the life, according to the custom of the painters of those times, has great character of nature, and is very minutely finished, though the painter was sixty-six years old when it was done; for the date on it is 1436. This picture claims perhaps more attention from its being painted by a man who has been said to be the first inventor of the art of painting in oil, than from any intrinsick merit in the work itself. However, his claim to this invention, which was first attributed to him by Vasari, and from his authority propagated in the world, has been justly disputed by the learned antiquarian Mr. Raspe, who has proved beyond all contradiction, that this art was invented and practised many ages before Van Eyck was born. Bruges.

The art is here in its infancy; but still having the appearance of a faithful representation of individual nature it does not fail to please. To a certain degree the painter has accomplished his purpose;

Bruges. which is more than can be said of two heads by Rubens of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the same sacristy, which are neither a good representation of individual or general nature: however, each of these heads is enshrined in a rich tabernacle of silver, locked up, and shown only on high festivals. The great reputation which Rubens has so justly acquired, is here extended to pictures slightly painted, and which perhaps he himself would be ashamed to acknowledge as his: they appear to have nothing to recommend them, but a tint of colour and lightness of pencil; a merit which indeed Rubens seldom wanted: they are insipid, without grace, dignity, or character of any kind.

### Church of Notre Dame.

Michael Angelo. The Virgin and Christ (Bambino) in marble, said to be of Michael Angelo. It has certainly the air of his school, and is a work of considerable merit; it was a prize taken by a Dutch Corsair going from Civita Vecchia to Genoa.

## GHENT.—THE CATHEDRAL.

In this great Church is the St. Ba- RUBENS.
von of Rubens. This picture was formerly the ornament of the high altar of this cathedral, but was displaced to make room for an ordinary piece of sculpture. When Rubens was thus degraded, one may conclude his fame was then not established: he had not been dead long enough to be canonized, as he may be said to be at present. It is now placed in a chapel behind the great altar. The saint is represented in the upper part of the picture, in armour, kneeling, received by a priest at the door of a church; below is a man who may be supposed to be his steward, giving money to the poor. Two women are standing by, dressed in the fashion of the times when Rubens lived; one of them appears to be pulling off a chain which falls from her neck, as if she intended to follow the example before her. This picture, for composition, colouring, richness of effect, and

GHENT. all those qualities in which Rubens more particularly excelled, claims a rank amongst his greatest and best works. It is engraved by Pilsen.

HUBERT and JOHN VANEYCK. In a chapel is a work of the brothers Hubert and John Van Eyck, representing the Adoration of the Lamb,—a story from the Apocalypse: it contains a great number of figures in a hard manner, but there is great character of truth and nature in the heads; and the landscape is well coloured.

GERARD HONTHORST. In the third Chapel on the right, is a picture of St. Sebastian, by Gerard Honthorst (1663). This picture is mentioned, not for any great excellence that it possesses, but from its being much talked of here: people fancy they see great expression of tenderness in the woman who is drawing the arrows from the Saint's body; but she appeared to me perfectly insipid, and totally without expression of any kind: the head of St. Sebastian is hard and disagree-

able; the body indeed is well drawn, and not ill coloured, and is the only part of the picture that deserves any commendation. GHENT.

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH.

IN this church is, or rather was, the famous crucifixion of Vandyck; for it is almost destroyed by cleaning. It is well known by the fine print of Bolswert, and it appears by what remains to have been one of his most capital works. VANDYCK.

Vandyck has here introduced a most beautiful horse in an attitude of the utmost grace and dignity. This is the same horse on which he drew Charles the Fifth, which is in the gallery at Florence; the head of the Emperor he copied from Titian.

St. John's hand in this picture comes round the Virgin Mary's neck, and falls on the other shoulder. The first impression of Bolswert's plate has this

GHENT. circumstance; but it was afterwards changed, being supposed to be too familiar an attitude.

SEGERS. Christ scourged, by Segers; the arm finely drawn, and the body well coloured, but too large.

LANG JAN. St. Hubert, a well painted and well composed picture, by Lang Jan.

## THE RECOLLETS.

RUBENS. The high altar; a profane allegorical picture by Rubens. Christ with Jupiter's thunder and lightning in his hand, denouncing vengeance on a wicked world, represented by a globe lying on the ground with the serpent twined round it: this globe St. Francis appears to be covering and defending with his mantle. The Virgin is holding Christ's hand, and showing her breasts; implying, as I suppose, the right she has to intercede and have an interest with him whom she suckled. The Christ, which is ill drawn, in an attitude

affectedly contrasted, is the most ungracious figure that can be imagined: the best part of the picture is the head of St. Francis. GHENT.

Mary Magdalen expiring, supported by ill drawn angels, by Rubens; the saint herself old and disagreeable. RUBENS.

St. Francis receiving the Stimate, likewise by Rubens;—a figure without dignity, and more like a beggar: though his dress is mean, he ought surely to be represented with the dignity and simplicity of a Saint. Upon the whole Rubens would appear to no great advantage at Ghent, if it was not for the picture of St. Bavon. RUBENS.

ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH.

THE great altar, representing some history of this saint, is painted by N. Roose, a painter of no great merit; but this is far superior to any other of his works, which are plentifully dispersed over Flanders. It is of a mellow N. ROOSE.

GHENT. colour, and has great force and brilliancy: it is illuminated by torch-light, but so well managed, as to have nothing of that disagreeable effect which Honthorst, Segers, Schalcken, and others, gave to their pictures, when they represented night-pieces.

ROMBOUTS St. Joseph advertised by an Angel, by Rombouts. The angel is an upright figure, and treads the air with great grace; his countenance is likewise beautiful, as is also that of the Virgin.

ALOST ST. MARTIN.

RUBENS. St. Rock interceding with Christ for the diseased of the plague, by Rubens. The composition is upon the same plan as that of St. Bavon at Ghent. The picture is divided into two parts; the Saint and Christ are represented in the upper part, and the effects of the plague in the lower part of the picture.—In this piece the grey is rather too predominant, and the figures have not that union with their ground which is generally so ad-

mirable in the works of Rubens. I suspect it has been in some picture-cleaner's hands, whom I have often known to darken every part of the ground about the figure, in order to make the flesh look brighter and clearer; by which the general effect is destroyed. There is a print from this picture, by P. Pontius. GHENT.

BRUSSELS. ST. GUDULE.

CHRIST's charge to Peter with two of the Apostles. The characters heavy, without grace or dignity; the handling, on a close examination appears tame even to the suspicion of its being a copy: the colouring is remarkably fresh. The name of Rubens would not stand high in the world, if he had never produced other pictures than such as this. On the same pillar is a Pieta of B. Van Orlay, with six portraits of the family who presented this picture to the church. The old man who appears to be the father, has great nature, but hard, as the whole picture is in a dry Gothick style. BRUSSELS. RUBENS. B. VAN ORLAY.

Brussels.

## Unshod Carmalites.

Rubens. The high altar; the Assumption, by Rubens. The principal figure, the Virgin, is the worst in the composition, both in regard to the character of the countenance, the drawing of the figure, and even its colour; for she is dressed, not in what is the fixed dress of the Virgin, blue and red, but entirely in a colour between blue and grey, heightened with white; and this, coming on a white Glory, gives a deadness to that part of the picture. The Apostles and the two women are in Rubens's best manner; the angels are beautifully coloured, and unite with the sky in perfect harmony; the masses of light and shade are conducted with the greatest judgment, and excepting the upper part where the Virgin is, it is one of Rubens's rich pictures.

Copies of Rubens. Here are about the Church pretty good copies, making in all ten pictures, of that great work of Rubens, the Triumph of the Church. The originals were destroyed by fire, when the Prince's palace was burnt in 1731.

On the left side of the high altar, Christ and St. Theresa with two angels; one supports her, and the other presents to her bosom a flaming arrow; neither are very angelical: the head of the saint is finely drawn and painted; the Christ is likewise well drawn for Rubens; but the effect is rather hard, proceeding from its being wrought up too highly: it is smooth as enamel, which takes off that suppleness which appears in his other works: this is certainly not in his best manner, though it seems to have cost him the most trouble. BRUSSELS. RUBENS.

In the sacristy is a fine portrait by Rubens. RUBENS.

## CAPUCHINS.

THE high altar by Rubens: Christ dead, lying on the lap of the Virgin; two angels holding the lance; near is a St. Francis and St. Elizabeth with a handkerchief to her eyes. This was probably one of Rubens's best pictures, but it appears to have suffered much from cleaning; the mezzotints of RUBENS.

BRUSSELS. the flesh of Christ are quite blue, as is the linen: upon the whole it has the appearance of the coloured prints of Le Blond. The drapery of the Magdalen at the feet of Christ is execrable; the angels have been totally repainted. There are prints of this picture both by Pontius and Bolswert.

VANDYCK. On the pillar on the right hand near the choir is St. Antony of Padua, holding the Christ in his arms, by Vandyck; and on the left hand its companion, St. Francis: both those figures have great expression; but they are slightly painted, and certainly not intended for publick pictures. Prints of these by Krafft.

## ST. GERY.

KOEBERGER. THE entombing of Christ, by Koeberger, 1660: an admirable picture in the style of the Roman school. The character elegant, well drawn and coloured; the blue drapery of the Virgin is the only defective part; it is ill folded, and the colour does not harmo-

nize with the rest. This picture is equal to the best of Domenichino. I was much surprized to find such excellence in a painter of whom I knew little more than seeing a print of his portrait among Vandyck's heads. I have since seen more of his works, but none equal to this; which I would place in the first rank of all the pictures at Brussels. BRUSSELS.

The fascinating power of Rubens's pencil has prevented this picture from possessing such reputation as it undoubtedly deserves: simplicity is no match against the splendour of Rubens, at least at first sight; and few stay to consider longer. The best pictures of the Italian school, if they ornamented the churches of Antwerp, would be overpowered by the splendour of Rubens; they certainly ought not to be overpowered by it; but it resembles eloquence, which bears down every thing before it, and often triumphs over superior wisdom and learning.

BRUSSELS. BERNARD. VAN ORLAY. In the first Chapel on the right hand, is the birth of Christ, by Bernard Van Orlay: it is a chapel belonging to this painter's family, in which they all lie buried. Under this picture is another, in which are portraits of himself and his family; nine figures on their knees, as praying; but these must have been painted by his descendants, who were likewise painters, the date on the picture being 1590; thirty years after Bernard's death. Both pictures are painted in the old dry manner; but there is great truth in the countenance of the portraits, and the Nativity shows it came from a good school, that of Raffaelle; there is a simplicity and earnestness in one of the shepherds, which is admirable.

M. COXIS. In the second Chapel, a good picture of Christ mocked by the Jews, by M. Coxis.

## MR. DANOOT'S.

Among the private cabinets at Brussels, that of Mr. Danoot, the Banker,

claims particular attention. He has appropriated little more than one room of his house for pictures, and has therefore been very attentive in the choice of what he has admitted. BRUSSELS.

To mention only a few of the most striking:—Two sketches by Rubens; the Rape of the Sabines, and the women endeavouring to prevent the Roman and Sabine soldiers from joining battle: this last has more novelty, and is the most interesting of the two. The women are here placed between the two armies, some hanging on the soldiers' arms, others pressing the horses backward, and others holding up their infants at arms' length, and showing them to the soldiers, to excite their compassion. The whole composition is full of animation, to which the air of the horses, thus pressed backwards, does not a little contribute. Both these sketches are admirably composed, and in every respect excellent; few pictures of Rubens, even of his most finished RUBENS.

BRUSSELS. works, give a higher idea of his genius. All the parts are more determined than is usual in sketches. They are what I apprehend he put into the hands of his scholars, from which they advanced and carried on the great picture, which he afterwards retouched and finished.

RUBENS. Another sketch of the same master; the finding of Romulus and Remus.

RUBENS. A Child in a Cradle, with three women, by Rubens; the scene a landscape, the figures somewhat less than life. This picture has not so much force as his works in general, and appears not to have received his last touches.

REMBRANDT. Rembrandt's portrait, by himself, half length, when he was old, in a very unfinished manner, but admirable for its colour and effect: his pallet and pencils and mahlstick are in his hand, if it may be so called; for it is so slightly touched, that it can scarce be made out to be a hand.

A Woman with a sprig of jessamy in her hand, by Lionardo da Vinci. There is beauty in the countenance, but it is in a hard manner.—A small picture by young Teniers, of Boors shooting at a but or target; in his best manner. His name and the date are on it, which I took down to mark the part of his life when he was in his zenith of perfection; the date is 1645; he was then 35 years old, being born in 1610.

BRUSSELS.

LIONARDO DA VINCI.

YOUNG TENIERS.

Another picture of old David Teniers, which has a good landscape, but it has not the neat and elegant touch of young David; it seems to have proceeded from a more clumsy workman.

OLD DAVID TENIERS.

## PRINCE DE LIGNE'S.

THERE is nothing here worth attention, except a whole-length portrait of John Count of Nassau, by Vandyck. The head of this picture is engraved in Vandyck's book of portraits. The character and drawing are admirable;

VANDYCK.

BRUSSELS. the face seems to have lost a little of its brilliancy: It is much in the manner of Lord Strafford's picture in the possession of the Duke of Grafton.

VANDYCK. Or Copy. A picture of Minerva and Mercury, bridling or taming Pegasus. It appears to be a Vandyck, or a copy after him: as it hangs between two windows, I could not determine which was the case.

VANDYCK. A Pieta of Vandyck, in the manner of Rubens; the same as one at Dusseldorp, but not so good; and it is there disputed whether their picture is of Rubens or Vandyck. The Virgin's eyes are disagreeably red; the whole without beauty of any kind, except in regard to its colour.

LUCA GIORDANO. About half a dozen Luca Giordanos.

MR. ORION'S

D. RYCKAERT. A country town pillaged by soldiers, by D. Ryckaert. It is painted in a colder manner than I expected from the

sketch which I have in my possession in colours. BRUSSELS.

A sketch by Rubens, of three saints on their knees: likewise two admirable sketches of the two ends of the ceiling of the Banqueting-house*; the middle part was in Lord Orford's collection, which is now in Russia. RUBENS.

A painter drawing after a plaister-figure of a child; perfect in its kind.

A Nativity, by Jordaens; a capricious composition in the manner of Tintoret. JORDAENS.

Many excellent small pictures of Teniers, Van Uden, Asselyn Crabbetje, and others.

He has too Rembrandts; The wrestling of Jacob and the Angel, and a portrait; but neither of them excellent. REMBRANDT.

* These two sketches were afterwards purchased by our author. M.

MECHLIN. My friend remarked, that Mr. Orion was almost the only gentleman who showed his own pictures, that did not pester us by prating about their merit. He certainly has pictures which well deserve to be praised, but he left that part to us.

## MECHLIN.—THE CATHEDRAL.

RUBENS. The Last Supper, by Rubens. The heads of the Apostles and style of drapery are in Rubens's best manner; but the picture is in bad condition, as it is mildewed: the Christ, the worst head. The principal figure is here, as is generally the case, the worst figure in the composition. Perhaps, this is unavoidable: it is here as in poetry; a perfect character makes but an insipid figure; the genius is cramped and confined, and cannot indulge itself in those liberties which give spirit to the character, and of course interest the spectator. It has been observed, that Milton has not succeeded in the speeches which he has given to God the Father, or to Christ,

so well as in those which he has put in the mouths of the rebel angels.—Under the table is a dog gnawing a bone; a circumstance mean in itself, and certainly unworthy such a subject, however properly it might fill a corner of such a picture as the marriage at Cana, by Paul Veronese. Beside the impropriety, one does not see how the dog came by his bone, nothing of that kind being on the table; but the word SUPPER was excuse enough for Rubens, who was always glad of an opportunity of introducing animals into his pictures. MECHLIN.

There is a print of this picture by Bolswert.

On one side hangs a small picture of Christ washing the Disciples' feet, and on the other a picture of the same size, of Christ entering Jerusalem, likewise by Rubens; they are both well composed, and that appears to be their whole merit. RUBENS.

MECHLIN. There is a circumstance belonging to the Altar piece, which may be worth
RUBENS. relating, as it shows Rubens's manner of proceeding in large works. The person who bespoke this picture, a citizen of Mechlin, desired, to avoid the danger of carriage, that it might be painted at Mechlin; to this the painter easily consented, as it was very near his country-seat at Steen. Rubens, having finished his sketch in colours, gave it as usual to one of his scholars, (Van Egmont,) and sent him to Mechlin to dead-colour from it the great picture. The gentleman, seeing this proceeding, complained that he bespoke a picture of the hand of the master, not of the scholar, and stopped the pupil in his progress. However, Rubens satisfied him that this was always his method of proceeding; and that this piece would be as completely his work as if he had done the whole from the beginning. The Citizen was satisfied, and Rubens proceeded with the picture, which appears to me to have no indications of neglect in any part; on the con-

trary, I think it *has been* one of his best pictures, though those who know this circumstance pretend to see Van Egmont's inferior genius transpire through Rubens's touches. MECHLIN.

## RECOLLETS.

THE great altar, in the church of the Recollets, is Christ crucified between the two Thieves, by Vandyck. This, perhaps, is the most capital of all his works, in respect to the variety and extensiveness of the design, and the judicious disposition of the whole. In the efforts which the thieves make to disengage themselves from the cross, he has successfully encountered the difficulty of the art; and the expression of grief and resignation in the Virgin is admirable. This picture, upon the whole, may be considered as one of the first pictures in the world, and gives the highest idea of Vandyck's powers: it shows that he had truly a genius for history-painting, if it had not been taken VANDYCK.

MECHLIN. off by portraits. The colouring of this picture is certainly not of the brightest kind, but it seems as well to correspond with the subject as if it had the freshness of Rubens. St. John is a mean character, the only weak part in the picture, unless we add another circumstance, though but a minute one; the hair of the Magdalen, at the feet of Christ, is too silky, and indeed looks more like silk drapery than hair.—There is a print of the head of this Magdalen, to which is added a skull.

VANDYCK. The altar on the right, by Vandyck; St. Bonavent, supported by an angel, whilst another is giving him the Sacrament. The Priest at the altar is without dignity; he is looking over his shoulder as if he was only satisfying his curiosity to see what they were about: the Saint is likewise poorly imagined, and makes but a despicable figure in comparison of the manner in which the same kind of subject has been treated by Domenichino and Agostino Caracci, in their pictures of

the communion of St. Jerome. The colouring is not brilliant; a reddish colour being too predominant in the flesh, particularly in the shadows. This, as I have before observed, is the case with many of Vandyck's pictures. A print by Franciscus Vanden Wyngaerde. MECHLIN.

THE CHURCH OF ST. JOHN.

The great Altar, the Adoration of the Magi, by Rubens; a large and rich composition; but there is a want of force in the Virgin and Child: they appear of a more shadowy substance than the rest of the picture, which has his usual solidity and richness. One of the Kings holds an incense-vase. This circumstance is mentioned to distinguish this picture from the many others which Rubens has painted of this subject. It is engraved by L. Vostermans. RUBENS.

On the inside of one of the doors is the Decollation of St. John the Baptist, on the other St. John the Evangelist in the cauldron of boiling oil. The figures, RUBENS.

MECHLIN. which are putting him into the cauldron want energy, which is not a common defect of Rubens: the character of the head of the Saint is vulgar, which indeed in him, is not an uncommon defect. The whole is of a mellow and rich colouring. On the outside of those doors is John baptising Christ, and St. John the Evangelist in the Isle of Patmos, writing the Apocalypse: both of these are in his best manner; the Eagle of St. John is remarkably well painted; the baptism is much damaged. Under these are three pannels, on which are the Nativity, the Crucifix, and the Resurrec-

RUBENS. tion. Though they are all of Rubens, they have very little merit, except an air of facility of hand. Of the Nativity there is a print by Vostermans, which appears as if engraved after a finished picture. Probably the drawing which the engraver made from the picture was corrected by Rubens: what seems to confirm this, is the print being dedicated by Rubens himself to his friend Petrus Venius: "Testem hanc exanimo," &c.

Rubens was paid for these eight pictures eighteen hundred Florins of Brabant, about 180 pounds English, as appears by the receipt preserved in the sacristy; and the whole was begun and finished in eighteen days. MECHLIN.

## AUGUSTINS.

In the church of the Augustins was the famous picture by Rubens, of the Virgin and Christ, St. Catharine, St. Agnes, Christine Marguerite, and other female Saints; which was sold to Verhalst at Brussels, and bought at his sale by the Duke of Rutland, in whose possession it now is. A print of this picture by Jode. RUBENS.

## ANTWERP.—THE CATHEDRAL.

On entering the great door on the right, is the Last Judgement, said to be by B. Van Orlay, but I suspect it to be by some of his descendants; it is much inferior to what we saw of him at Brussels. On the folding-doors are the seven acts of Mercy; it has no excel- B. VAN ORLAY.

ANTWERP. lence of any kind, to make amends for its extreme hardness of manner.

KOEBERGER. The altar of the Archers; St. Sebastian, by Koeberger. There are good parts in this picture, but it is not equal to his Pieta at Brussels: the boy in half shadow, who holds a bow and arrows, and the priest who holds an image in his hand, the face seen by a reflected light, are the best parts of the picture. The body of the Saint is well coloured, and in a broad manner. Two Women's heads are introduced very awkwardly in the bottom of the picture.

## THE CHAPEL OF ST. MICHAEL.

F. FLORIS. THE fall of the Angels by F. Floris, 1554; which has some good parts, but without masses, and dry. On the thigh of one of the figures he has painted a fly for the admiration of the vulgar; there is a foolish story of this fly being painted by J. Mastys, and that it had the honour of deceiving Floris.

## THE CHAPEL BELONGING TO THE COMPANY OF ARQUEBUSE. ANTWERP.

THE famous descent of the Cross: this picture of all the works of Rubens, is that which has the most reputation. I had consequently conceived the highest idea of its excellence; knowing the print, I had formed in my imagination what such a composition would produce in the hands of such a painter. I confess I was disappointed. However, this disappointment did not proceed from any deficiency in the picture itself; had it been in the original state in which Rubens left it, it must have appeared very different: but it is mortifving to see to what degree it has suffered by cleaning and mending: that brilliant effect, which it undoubtedly once had, is lost in a mist of varnish, which appears to be chilled or mildewed. The Christ is in many places retouched, so as to be visible at a distance; the St. John's head repainted; and other parts, on a close inspection, appear to be chipping off, and ready to RUBENS.

ANTWERP. fall from the canvass. However, there is enough to be seen to satisfy any connoisseur, that in its perfect state it well deserved all its reputation.

The composition of this picture is said to be borrowed from an Italian print: This print I never saw; but those who have seen it, say, that Rubens has made no deviation from it, except in the attitude of the Magdalen. On the print is written, "Peter Passer invenit; Hieronymus Wirix sculpsit."

The greatest peculiarity of this composition is the contrivance of the white sheet, on which the body of Jesus lies: this circumstance was probably what induced Rubens to adopt the composition. He well knew what effect white linen, opposed to flesh, must have, with his powers of colouring; a circumstance which was not likely to enter into the mind of an Italian painter, who probably would have been afraid of the linen's

hurting the colouring of the flesh, and have kept it down of a low tint. And the truth is, that none but great colourists can venture to paint pure white linen near flesh; but such know the advantage of it: so that possibly what was stolen by Rubens, the possessor knew not how to value; and certainly no person knew so well as Rubens how to use. After all, this may perhaps turn out another *Lauder's* detection of plagiarism. I could wish to see this print, if there is one, to ascertain how far Rubens was indebted to it for his Christ, which I consider as one of the finest figures that ever was invented: it is most correctly drawn, and I apprehend in an attitude of the utmost difficulty to execute. The hanging of the head on his shoulder, and the falling of the body on one side, gives such an appearance of the heaviness of death, that nothing can exceed it. ANTWERP.

Of the three Mariés, two of them have more beauty than he generally

ANTWERP. bestowed on female figures; but no great elegance of character. The St. Joseph of Arimathea is the same countenance which he so often introduced in his works; a smooth fat face,—a very unhistorical character.

The principal light is formed by the body of Christ and the white sheet; there is no second light which bears any proportion to the principal; in this respect it has more the manner of Rembrandt's disposition of light than any other of Rubens's works; however there are many little detached lights distributed at some distance from the great mass, such as the head and shoulders of the Magdalen, the heads of the two Maries, the head of St. Joseph, and the back and arm of the figure leaning over the Cross; the whole surrounded with a dark sky, except a little light in the horizon, and above the Cross.

The historical anecdote relating to this

picture, says, that it was given in exchange for a piece of ground, on which Rubens built his house; and that the agreement was only for a picture representing their patron. St. Christopher, with the Infant Christ on his shoulders. Rubens who wished to surprise them by his generosity, sent five pictures instead of one; a piece of gallantry on the side of the painter, which was undoubtedly well received by the Arquebusers; since it was so much to their advantage, however expensive to the maker of it. ANTWERP.

All those pictures were intended to refer to the name of their patron Christopher.

In the first place, the body of Christ on the Altar is borne by St. John, St. Joseph of Arimathea, Mary Magdalen, &c.

On one side of the left door, is the Salutation of Mary and Elizabeth. The

ANTWERP. Virgin here bears Christ before he is born.

On the reverse of the same door is St. Christopher himself, bearing the Infant on his shoulders. The picture which corresponds with this on the other side, is the only one which has no reference to the word Christopher. It represents an Hermit with a lantern, to receive Christ when he arrives at the other side of the river. The hermit appears to be looking to the other side; one hand holds the lantern, and the other is very naturally held up to prevent the light from coming upon his eyes. But on the reverse of this door we have another Christopher; the Priest Simeon bearing Christ high in his arms, and looking upwards. This picture, which has not suffered, is admirable indeed, the head of the priest more especially, which nothing can exceed; the expression, drawing, and colouring, are beyond all description, and as fresh as if the piece were just painted.

The colouring of the St. Christopher is too red and bricky, and the outline is not flowing. This figure was all that the company of the Arquebusers expected; but Rubens justly thought that such a figure would have made but a poor subject for an Altar. ANTWERP.

There is a print of the Descent by Luc Vostermans, of the St. Christopher by Remy Eyndhout; of Simeon by P. Pontius: those which have a dedication to Gasp. Hubert, are bad impressions and retouched. The Visitation is engraved by P. de Jode. The Hermit has not been engraved.

On the side of the choir are the monuments of the two celebrated printers of the Netherlands, John Baptist Moretus and Martin Plantin; that of the former is ornamented with an admirable picture by Rubens, about half the size of life; Christ coming out of the Sepulchre in great splendour, the soldiers terrified, and tumbling one over the RUBENS.

ANTWERP. other: the Christ is finely drawn, and of a rich colour. The St. John the Baptist on the door is likewise in his best manner; only his left leg is something too large. On the other door is St. Barbara; the figure without character, and the colouring without brilliancy. The predominant colour in her dress is purple, which has but a heavy effect.

BACKER. The monument of Plantin has for its ornament the Last Judgement, by Backer, correctly drawn, but without any skill in disposition of light and shadow.

## THE CHAPEL OF THE SCHOOL-MASTERS.

FRANCIS FRANCK. CHRIST among the Doctors, by Francis Franck; called the young Franck. There are some fine heads in this picture; particularly the three men that are looking on one book, are admirable characters; the figures are well drawn, and well grouped: the Christ is but a poor figure.

On a pillar opposite, and not far from the Descent from the Cross, is the Adoration of the Magi. The Virgin and the Infant Christ are admirable. It appears to be the work of B. Van Orlay. On the doors on each side are portraits well painted, the woman especially. On one of the pillars is a picture of Rubens, which serves as a monument for the family of Goubau: He and his wife are represented, half length, at prayers, addressing themselves to the Virgin and Infant Christ: the old man is well painted, the Virgin but indifferently. ANTWERP. B. VAN ORLAY. RUBENS.

CORDWAINERS' CHAPEL.

THE martyrdom of St. Crepin and Crepinianus, by Ambrose Franck, has some good heads, but in a dry manner. AMBROSE FRANCK.

THE CONFRERES DE L'ARBULETRE.

THE martyrdom of St. George, by Schut. It is well composed and well drawn, and is one of his best pictures: but the Saint has too much of that character which Painters have fixed for SCHUT.

ANTWERP. Christ. There is a want of brilliancy from its having too much harmony: to produce force and strength, a stronger opposition of colours is required.

Passing by the chapels in which are altars by Martin and Simon de Vos, and others, which have nothing worth attention, we come to

*The* CHAPEL *of the* CIRCUMCISION.

QUINTIN MATSYS. WHERE is the famous work of Quintin Matsys, the blacksmith. The middle part is what the Italians call a Pieta; a dead Christ on the knees of the Virgin accompanied with the usual figures. On the door on one side is the daughter of Herod bringing in St. John's head at the banquet; on the other, the Saint in the cauldron. In the Pieta the Christ appears as if starved to death; in which manner it was the custom of the painters of that age always to represent a dead Christ; but there are heads in this picture not exceeded by Raffaelle, and indeed not unlike his manner of painting

portraits; hard and minutely finished. The head of Herod, and that of a fat man near the Christ, are excellent. The painter's own portrait is here introduced. In the banquet, the daughter is rather beautiful, but too skinny and lean; she is presenting the head to her mother, who appears to be cutting it with a knife. ANTWERP.

THE ALTAR OF THE GARDENERS.

A Nativity, a large composition of Francis Floris, and perhaps the best of his works. It is well composed, drawn, and coloured; the heads are in general finely painted, more especially St. Joseph, and a woman in the fore-ground. FRANCIS FLORIS.

A Pieta by Rubens, which serves as a monument of the family of Michielsens and is fixed on one of the pillars: this is one of his most careful pictures; the characters are of a higher style of beauty than usual, particularly the Mary Magdalen, weeping, with her hand clenched. The colouring of the Christ and RUBENS.

ANTWERP. the Virgin is of a most beautiful and delicate pearly tint, opposed by the strong high colouring of St. Joseph.

I have said in another place, that Rubens does not appear to advantage, but in large works; this picture may be considered as an exception.

RUBENS. The Virgin and Infant Christ on one of the doors is the same as one at Marlborough House. The Virgin is holding Christ, who stands on a table; the Infant appears to be attentively looking at something out of the picture: the vacant stare of a child is very naturally represented; but it is a mean, ordinary-looking boy, and by no means a proper representation of the Son of GOD. The only picture of Christ in which Rubens succeeds, is when he represents him dead; as a child, or as a man engaged in any act, there is no divinity; no grace or dignity of character appears.

On the other door is St. John, finely

coloured; but this character is likewise vulgar. ANTWERP

On the outside of the door are two pictures in black and white; one of a Christ, and the other the Virgin and Child; these, as well as the two above mentioned, by Rubens. RUBENS.

THE GREAT ALTAR.

THE Assumption of the Virgin. She is surrounded by a choir of angels; below are the Apostles, and a great number of figures. This picture has not so rich an appearance in regard to colour as many other pictures of Rubens; proceeding, I imagine, from there being too much blue in the sky: however, the lower part of the picture has not that defect. It is said to have been painted in sixteen days. The print is by Bolswert. RUBENS.

ST. WALBURGE.

THE great altar of the Choir is the first publick work which Rubens exe- RUBENS.

ANTWERP. cuted after he returned from Italy. In the centre is Christ nailed to the Cross, with a number of figures exerting themselves in different ways to raise it. One of the figures appears flushed, all the blood rising into his face from his violent efforts; others in intricate attitudes, which, at the same time that they show the great energy with which the business is done, give that opportunity which painters desire, of encountering the difficulties of the art, in foreshortening and in representing momentary actions. This subject, which was probably of his own choosing, gave him an admirable opportunity of exhibiting his various abilities to his countrymen; and it is certainly one of his best and most animated compositions.

The bustle, which is in every part of the picture, makes a fine contrast to the character of resignation in the crucified Saviour. The sway of the body of Christ is extremely well imagined. The taste of the form in the Christ, as well

as in the other figures, must be acknowledged to be a little inclinable to the heavy; but it has a noble, free, and flowing outline. The invention of throwing the Cross obliquely from one corner of the picture to the other, is finely conceived; something in the manner of Tintoret: it gives a new and uncommon air to his subject and we may justly add, that it is uncomonly beautiful. The contrast of the body with the legs is admirable, and not overdone.

The doors are a continuation of the subject. That on the right has a group of women and children, who appear to feel the greatest emotion and horrour at the sight: the Virgin and St. John, who are behind, appear very properly with more resignation. On the other door are the officers on horseback; attending behind them are the two thieves, whom the executioners are nailing to the Cross.

It is difficult to imagine a subject

ANTWERP. better adapted for a painter to exhibit his art of composition than the present; at least Rubens has had the skill to make it serve, in an eminent degree, for that purpose. In the naked figures of the Christ, and of the executioners, he had ample room to show his knowledge of the anatomy of the human body in different characters. There are likewise women of different ages, which is always considered as a necessary part of every composition, in order to produce variety: there are, besides, children and horsemen; and to have the whole range of variety, he has even added a dog, which he has introduced in an animated attitude, with his mouth open, as if panting: admirably well painted. His animals are always to be admired: the horses here are perfect in their kind, of a noble character, animated to the highest degree. Rubens, conscious of his powers in painting horses, introduced them in his pictures as often as he could. This part of the work, where the horses are represented, is by far the best in regard to

colouring; it has a freshness which the other two pictures want: but those appear to have suffered by the sun. This picture of the horsemen is situated on the south-east side, whereas the others, being east and south-east, are more exposed: however, at present there is no longer danger, the fathers have taken the precaution to have a fixed window-blind, which the rays of the sun cannot penetrate. ANTWERP.

The central picture, as well as that of the group of women, does not, for whatever reason, stand so high for colour as every other excellence. There is a dryness in the tint; a yellow okery colour predominates over the whole; it has too much the appearance of a yellow chalk-drawing. I mean only to compare Rubens with himself; they might be thought excellent even in this respect, were they the work of almost any other painter. The flesh, as well as the rest of the picture, seems to want grey tints, which is not a general defect

ANTWERP. of Rubens; on the contrary, his mezzotints are often too grey.

The blue drapery, about the middle of the figure at the bottom of the Cross and the grey colour of some armour, are nearly all the cold colours in the picture; which are certainly not enough to qualify so large a space of warm colours. The principal mass of light is on the Christ's body; but in order to enlarge it, and improve its shape, a strong light comes on the shoulder of the figure with a bald-head: the form of this shoulder is somewhat defective; it appears too round.

Upon the whole, this picture must be considered as one of Rubens's principal works, and that appearance of heaviness which it has, when seen near, entirely vanishes when the picture is viewed from the body of the church, to which you descend from the choir by twenty stairs.

On the other side of the two doors, which turn round, are likewise two pictures, by Rubens; St. Catharine with a sword, and St. Eloi with a female Saint and Angels, as usual finely painted; but the figure of St. Eloi appears too gigantick. ANTWERP. RUBENS.

Of the elevation of the Cross and its appendages, there is a print in three sheets by Withous; of St. Eloi by Remoldus Eynhovedts, and of the St. Catharine by Bolswert.

In this church, on the left hand of the choir, is another picture by Rubens, of Christ after his resurrection sitting on his sepulchre, trampling on the symbol of death: it is a picture of no force of colouring, which possibly proceeds from its having been much damaged.—A print of this by Remoldus Eynhovedts. RUBENS.

ANTWERP. THE CHURCH OF THE JACOBINES*.

The great altar, a crucifixion by VANDYCK. Vandyck. St. Rosaria at the feet of Christ, and St. Dominick. A sepulchral lamp, and a flambeau reversed, are here introduced, to show that Christ is dead: two little angels are represented on each side of the Cross, and a larger angel below. The two little ones look like embrios, and have a bad effect; and the large angel is not painted with equal success, as many other parts of the picture. The shadows are too red, and the locks of the hair are all painted in a hard and heavy manner. For its defects ample amends is made in the Christ, which is admirably drawn and coloured; and a breadth of light preserved over the body with the greatest skill; at the same time that all the parts are distinctly marked. The form and character are of a more elegant kind than those we see commonly of Rubens.

The idea of St. Rosaria closing her eyes

* Nuns of the order of St. Dominick. R.

is finely imagined, and gives an uncommon and delicate expression to the figure. ANTWERP.

The conduct of the light and shadow of this picture is likewise worth the attention of a Painter. To preserve the principal mass of light which is made by the body of Christ, of a beautiful shape, the head is kept in half shadow. The under garment of St. Dominick and the angel make the second mass; and the St. Rosaria's head, handkerchief, and arm, the third.

The sketch for this picture is said to be within the convent, but I could not see it.—A Print by Bolswert.

UNSHOD CARMELITES.

In a recess on the right, on entering the church, is St. Anne, and the Virgin with a book in her hand, by Rubens. Behind St. Anne is a head of St. Joachim; two angels in the air with a crown. This picture is eminently well coloured, especially the angels; the RUBENS.

ANTWERP. union of their colour with the sky is wonderfully managed. It is remarkable that one of the angels has Psyche's wings, which are like those of a butterfly. This picture is improperly called —St. Anne teaching the Virgin to read; who is represented about fourteen or fifteen years of age, too old to begin to learn to read. The white silk drapery of the Virgin is well painted, but not historical; the silk is too particularly distinguished, a fault of which Rubens is often guilty, in his female drapery; but by being of the same colour as the sky it has a soft harmonious effect. The rest of the picture is of a mellow tint.—A Print by Bolswert.

RUBENS. At an altar on the opposite little nich on the left, Christ relieving souls out of purgatory by the intercession of St. Therese. The Christ is a better character, has more beauty and grace, than is usual with Rubens; the outline remarkably undulating, smooth, and flowing. The head of one of the women

in purgotary is beautiful, in Rubens's way; the whole has great harmony of colouring and freedom of pencil: it is in his best manner.—A Print by Bolswert. ANTWERP.

The Altar in the choir, by Segers. The subject is the marriage of the Virgin; larger than life. This is one of his best pictures; much in the manner of Rubens. SEGERS.

On the left of the choir is a Pieta, by Rubens. The body of Christ is here supported by St John, instead of the Virgin, who is stooping forward to kiss Christ's cheek, whilst the Magdalen is kissing his hand. Of this picture there is no print, though it well deserves to be engraved. Perhaps the subject is handled too much in the same manner as that in the church of the Capuchins at Brussels. RUBENS.

## The Great Carmelites, or Shoed Carmelites.

On the right, as you enter the choir, Christ laying dead on the lap of God the Father, by Rubens; on each side an RUBENS.

ANTWERP. angel, with the instruments of crucifixion. The Christ is foreshortened with great skill in drawing.—Engraved by Bolswert.

## CHURCH OF THE FACONS (NUNS).

VANDYCK. IN a little chapel the Virgin and Infant Christ, by Vandyck; a priest kneeling; an angel behind directing his attention to the Virgin. The drapery seems to be by another hand. There is nothing in this picture very much to be admired.

## ST. MICHAEL.

RUBENS. THE great altar, the Adoration of the Magi; a large and magnificent composition of near twenty figures, in Rubens's best manner. Such subjects seem to be more peculiarly adapted to the manner and style of Rubens: his excellence, his superiority, is not seen in small compositions.

One of the kings, who holds a cap in his hand, is loaded with drapery: his head appears too large, and upon the

whole he makes but an ungraceful figure. The head of the ox is remarkably well painted.—Engraved by Lommeli. ANTWERP.

On the left of the great altar is another picture of Rubens, St. Gregory with the Dove, dressed in the sacerdotal robes; behind him is St. George in armour; both noble figures; and the female saint, who is likewise in the front of the picture, is, for Rubens, uncommonly beautiful. Behind is St. Sebastian, and other Saints; and above are angels bearing a picture in a frame, of the Virgin and Child.—The print by Remoldus Eynhovedts. RUBENS.

Near this is a monument of Rubens's brother Philip, with an inscription and a portrait in oval, by Rubens. RUBENS.

In this church are many fine portraits inserted in monuments.

St. Norbert receiving the Sacrament, by Simon de Vos; in which are in- SIMON DE VOS.

ANTWERP. troduced a great number of portraits extremely well painted. De Vos was particularly excellent in portraits. There is in the poor-house in this city, his own portrait by himself, in black, leaning on the back of a chair, with a scroll of blue paper in his hand, so highly finished, in the broad manner of Correggio, that nothing can exceed it.

ERASMUS QUELLINUS. On the right cross it an immense large picture, by Erasmus Quellinus, containing some good heads, and figures not ill drawn; but it is an ill-conducted picture, and in bad condition.

## THE MINIMES.

THERE is nothing curious in the church; but in passing to the cloisters are forty pieces of glass pane, by Diepenbeke, of the life of St. Francis; and in an adjoining room a crucifix of Jordaens, admirable for its colouring, and the expression is better than usual; but the drawing of the limbs of Christ is defective.

THE CHURCH OF THE JACOBINS, ANTWERP.

THE altar of the choir is painted by Rubens: the subject the same as one mentioned before in the church of the Recollets at Ghent: Christ launching thunder on the world, the Virgin interceding; below are many saints, male and female, bishops and cardinals. Rubens acquired a predilection for allegories from his master, Otho Venius; but it may be doubted whether such fancies in a Christian church are not out of their proper place. St. Francis is here, as in the picture at Ghent, the best head. This picture has been much damaged, and St. Sebastian in particular has been repainted by some ignorant person: the sky has likewise been badly repaired. GOD the Father, who is leaning on a globe, has something majestick in the attitude. RUBENS.

A Council composed of saints, popes, cardinals, and bishops, by Rubens, the same subject as Raffaelle's, in the RUBENS.

ANTWERP. Vatican, called THE DISPUTE OF THE SACRAMENT. GOD the Father is represented alone in the distant sky; boy angels with labels.—Engraved by Snyers. The sky has been ill repainted, and does not harmonize with the rest of the work. The whole picture, indeed, seems to have suffered; for there is not that brilliancy which might be expected, nor indeed any extraordinary character of heads: the best is that immediately behind the bishops on the fore-ground.—A print by Snyers.

At an altar on the entrance to the choir, Christ carrying the cross; said to be one of the most early pictures of Vandyck. It is in many parts like the works of Rubens, particularly the figure with his back towards the spectator, which is well drawn.

The drapery of the Christ being dark, having become so probably by time, is scarcely at all seen, which makes the head look like that taken by St. Veronica.

This picture is much cracked, particularly the blue drapery of the Virgin, and the naked back of the figure above-mentioned.—A print by Alexander Voct. ANTWERP.

The altar of the chapel of St. Dominick, a black picture by Caravaggio; the Virgin and Christ with St. Dominick, and other saints. CARAVAGGIO.

About the church are represented the mysteries of St. Rosaria, and other subjects painted by various painters: the best of these pictures are those by Rubens and Jordaens. The flagellation of Christ is by Rubens. This picture, though admirably painted, is disagreeable to look at; the black and bloody stripes are marked with two much fidelity; and some of the figures are awkwardly scourging with their left hand.—A print by Pontius.

The picture of Jordaens is the Crucifixion, with the Virgin, St. John, Mary JORDAENS.

ANTWERP. Magdalen, and St. Elizabeth; much in the manner of Rubens.

The Adoration of the Shepherds. The light coming from Christ is said to be of Rubens, but there is nothing in the picture by which his manner can be with certainty recognized: there are parts which were certainly not painted by him, particularly the drapery of the Virgin.

ST. AUGUSTIN.

RUBENS. The Altar of the Choir is by Rubens. From the size of the picture, the great number of figures, and the skill with which the whole is conducted, this picture must be considered as one of the most considerable works of Rubens.

The Virgin and Infant Christ are represented at one distance, seated on high on a sort of pedestal, which has steps ascending to it: behind the Virgin is St. Joseph. On the right is St. Catharine, receiving the ring from

Christ. St. Peter and St. Paul are in the back-ground; and on the left, on the steps, St. John the Baptist, with the Lamb and Angels. Below are St. Sebastian, St. Augustin, St. Laurence, Paul the Hermit, and St. George in armour. By way of link to unite the upper and the lower part of the picture, are four female saints half way up the steps. The subject of this picture, if that may be called a subject where no story is represented, has no means of interesting the spectator: its value therefore must arise from another source: from the excellence of art, from the eloquence, as it may be called, of the artist. And in this the painter has shown the greatest skill, by disposing of more than twenty figures, without composition, and without crowding. The whole appears as much animated, and in motion, as it is possible for a picture to be, where nothing is doing; and the management of the masses of light and shade in this picture is equal to the

ANTWERP

ANTWERP. skill shown in the disposition of the figures.

There is a similar subject to this painted by Titian, which was in the church of St. Nicola de Fiari at Venice, where he has represented the same saints which are placed all on a line, without any connexion with each other; and above is the Virgin and Infant, equally unconnected with the rest of the picture. It is so completely separated, that it has been since made into two distinct pictures; the lower part forming that which is now in the Pope's collection in the Capitol.

By the disposition, Titian has certainly saved himself a great deal of that trouble of contrivance which composition requires. This artless manner is by many called simplicity; but that simplicity, which proceeds either from ignorance or laziness cannot deserve much commendation. As ignorance cannot be imputed to Titian, we may

conclude it was inattention; and indeed he has sufficiently shown that it did not proceed from ignorance by another picture of the same kind of subject in the church de Frari at Venice, where it is treated in a very different manner. Here the Virgin and child are placed on an altar, instead of a pedestal; St. Peter with an open book leaning on the altar, and looking at St. George, and another figure, which is kneeling. On the other side is St. Francis looking up to Christ, and recommending to his protection a noble Venetian, with four other figures, who are on their knees. Nothing can exceed the simplicity and dignity of these figures. They are drawn in profile, looking strait forward in the most natural manner, without any contrast or affectation of attitude whatever. The figure on the other side is likewise in profile, and kneeling; which, while it gives an air of formality to the picture, adds also to its grandeur and simplicity.

ANTWERP.

ANTWERP. This must be acknowledged to be above Rubens; that is, I fear he would have renounced it, had it occurred. Rubens's manner is often too artificial and picturesque for the GRAND STYLE. Titian knew very well that so much formality or regularity as to give the appearance of being above all the tricks of art, which we call picturesque, is of itself grandeur.

There is a quiet dignity in the composition of Titian, and an animation and bustle in that of Rubens; one is splendid, the other is grand and majestick. These two pictures may be considered among the best works of those great painters, and each characterises its respective author. They may therefore be properly opposed to each other, and compared together. I confess I was so overpowered with the brilliancy of this picture of Rubens, whilst I was before it, and under its fascinating influence, that I thought I had never before seen so great powers exerted

in the art. It was not till I was removed from its influence, that I could acknowledge any inferiority in Rubens to any other painter whatever. ANTWERP.

The composition of Titian is of that kind which leaves the middle space void, and the figures are ranged around it. In this space is the white linen that covers the altar; and it is for the sake of this white linen, I apprehend, that he has made an altar instead of a pedestal, in order to make the linen the principal light, which is about the middle of the picture. The second light is the Virgin, and Christ, and the heads of the figures.

The principal light in the lower part of Rubens's picture, is the body of St. Sebastian: that of the upper part is the light in the sky; in this point there is no apparent superiority on either side.

Of both these pictures there are prints;

ANTWERP. of Titian's picture the print is by Lefebre, and the Rubens is engraved by Snyers, and by Remoldus Eynhovedts: in the first impression of that of Snyers, there are parts of the Virgin, and St. Catharine, and the lap of St. Augustin, which are unfinished.

One is so much used to anachronisms in church pictures, that it ceases to be an object of criticism. From the frequency of seeing pictures peopled with men who lived in different ages, this impropriety may habitually become less offensive; introducing however, St. John the Baptist, as an elderly man, in the same picture where Christ is still an infant, though it may be said to be a crime of less magnitude, not being so violent a breach of chronology, yet appears to the spectator even more unpardonable, perhaps from his being so often used to see them represented together as children.

VANDYCK. The altar on the left hand; St. Au-

gustin in ecstasy, by Vandyck. This picture is of great fame, but in some measure disappointed my expectations; at least on just parting from the Rubens, the manner appeared hard and dry. The colouring is of a reddish kind, especially in the shadows, without transparency. The colours must have suffered some change, and are not now as Vandyck left them. This same defect of the red shadows I have observed in many of his pictures. The head of an elderly woman, said to be the saint's mother, is finely drawn, and is the best part of the picture; and the angel sitting on a cloud is the best of that group. The boy with the sceptre is hard, and has no union with the blue sky. ANTWERP.

This picture has no effect, from the want of a large mass of light; the two angels make two small masses of equal magnitude.

The St. Augustin is drest in black,

ANTWERP. though in the print of P. de Jode (according to the usual liberty of these engravers after Rubens and Vandyck) it makes the principal light; and a light is thrown on the other figures in the print, which are quite dark in the picture.

JORDAENS. An altar in the right aisle; the martyrdom of St. Apollonius by J. Jordaens. There is nothing much to be admired in this picture, except the grey-horse foreshortened, biting his knee, which is indeed admirable. Jordaens' horses are little inferior to those of Rubens.

On the sides of the church are hung many pictures of the inferior painters of the Flemish school; the best are, two of JORDAENS. J. Jordaens; the LAST SUPPER, in which are some excellent heads in the manner of Rubens, and Christ praying in the garden; but the Angels here are truly Flemish. There is likewise a BACKEREEL. crucifixion by Backereel, which has some merit.

In the sacristy is a small crucifix by Vandyck, well drawn; especially the head, which is a fine character. ANTWERP. VANDYCK.

## RECOLLETS.

THE altar of the choir is the famous crucifixion of Christ between the two thieves, by Rubens. To give animation to this subject, he has chosen the point of time when an executioner is piercing the side of Christ, whilst another with a bar of iron is breaking the limbs of one of the malefactors, who in his convulsive agony, which his body admirably expresses, has torn one of his feet from the tree to which it was nailed. The expression in the action of this figure is wonderful: the attitude of the other is more composed; and he looks at the dying Christ with a countenance perfectly expressive of his penitence. This figure is likewise admirable. The Virgin, St. John, and Mary the wife of Cleophas, are standing by with great expression of grief and RUBENS.

ANTWERP. resignation, whilst the Magdalen, who is at the feet of Christ, and may be supposed to have been kissing his feet, looks at the horseman with the spear, with a countenance of great horrour: as the expression carries with it no grimace or contortion of the features, the beauty is not destroyed. This is by far the most beautiful profile I ever saw of Rubens, or, I think, of any other painter; the excellence of its colouring is beyond expression. To say that she may be supposed to have been kissing Christ's feet, may be thought too refined a criticism; but Rubens certainly intended to convey that idea, as appears by the disposition of her hands; for they are stretched out towards the executioner, and one of them is before and the other behind the Cross; which gives an idea of her hands having been round it; and it must be remembered, that she is generally represented kissing the feet of Christ; it is her place and employment in those subjects. The good Centurion ought not to be forgotten, who is leaning

forward, one hand on the other, resting on the mane of his horse, while he looks up to Christ with great earnestness. ANTWERP.

The genius of Rubens no where appears to more advantage than here: it is the most carefully finished picture of all his works. The whole is conducted with the most consummate art; the composition is bold and uncommon, with circumstances which no other painter had ever before thought of; such as the breaking of the limbs, and the expression of the Magdalen, to which we may add the disposition of the three crosses, which are placed prospectively in an uncommon picturesque manner: the nearest bears the thief whose limbs are breaking; the next the Christ, whose figure is straiter than ordinary, as a contrast to the others; and the furthermost, the penitent thief: this produces a most picturesque effect, but it is what few but such a daring genius as Rubens would have attempted. It is here, and in such compositions, we properly see

ANTWERP. Rubens, and not in little pictures of Madonnas and Bambinos. It appears that Rubens made some changes in this picture, after Bolswert had engraved his print from it. The horseman who is in the act of piercing the side of Christ, holds the spear, according to the print, in a very tame manner, with the back of the hand over the spear, grasping it with only three fingers, the fore-finger straight lying on the spear; whereas in the picture, the back of the hand comes under the spear, and he grasps it with his whole force.

The other defect which is remedied in the picture, is the action of the executioner, who breaks the legs of the criminal; in the print both his hands are over the bar of iron, which makes a false action: in the picture the whole disposition is altered to the natural manner in which every person holds a weapon, which requires both hands; the right is placed over, and the left under it.

This print was undoubtedly done under the inspection of Rubens himself. It may be worth observing, that the keeping of the masses of light in the print differs much from the picture: this change is not from inattention, but design: a different conduct is required in a composition with colours, from what ought to be followed when it is in black and white only. We have here the authority of this great master of light and shadow, that a print requires more and larger masses of light, than a picture. ANTWERP.

In this picture the principal and the strongest light is the body of Christ, which is of a remarkable clear and bright colour; this is strongly opposed by the very brown complexion of the thieves, (perhaps the opposition here is too violent,) who make no great effect as light. The Virgin's outer drapery is dark blue, and the inner a dark purple; and St, John is in dark strong red; no part of these two figures is light in the picture, but the head and hands of the Virgin;

ANTWERP. but in the print they make the principal mass of light of the whole composition. The engraver has certainly produced a fine effect; and I suspect it is as certain, that if this change had not been made, it would have appeared a black and heavy print.

When Rubens thought it necessary in the print to make a mass of light of the drapery of the Virgin and St. John, it was likewise necessary that it should be of a beautiful shape, and be kept compact; it therefore became necessary to darken the whole figure of the Magdalen, which in the picture is at least as light as the body of Christ; her head, linen, arms, hair, and the feet of Christ, make a mass as light as the body of Christ: it appears therefore, that some parts are to be darkened, as well as other parts made lighter: this consequently is a science which an engraver ought well to understand, before he can presume to venture on any alteration from the picture which he means to represent.

The same thing may be remarked in many other prints by those engravers, who were employed by Rubens and Vandyck; they always gave more light than they were warranted by the picture: a circumstance which may merit the attention of engravers. ANTWERP.

I have dwelt longer on this picture than any other, as it appears to me to deserve extraordinary attention: it is certainly one of the first pictures in the world, for composition, colouring, and what was not to be expected from Rubens, correctness of drawing.

On one side of the great altar is a small crucifix, painted likewise by Rubens, which is admirable.—A print by H. Sneyers. RUBENS.

In the same choir is another crucifixion by F. Floris, with a great number of figures, many of them portraits, in which there is great nature, especially in the women. F. FLORIS.

ANTWERP. RUBENS. The altar of St. Francis, painted by Rubens. The Saint is receiving the communion, accompanied with many of his order: he is nearly naked, without dignity, and appears more like a lazar, than a Saint. Though there are good heads in this picture, yet the principal figure being so disgustful, it does not deserve much commendation.—A print by Hendrick Sneyers.

RUBENS. The Virgin kneeling on a reversed crescent, crowned by GOD the Father and Christ; over her is the dove, below is a group of angels. There is nothing here to be admired, but what relates to colouring; the splendour of the light indeed, that is behind those three figures, is very striking.—A print by Paulus Pontius.

VANDYCK. A Pieta by Vandyck, with St. John, and two angels. This has been one of his most chaste pictures, but the colouring is gone. The expression of the Virgin is admirable, at least equal to

that of Annibale Caracci, in the Duke of Orleans's collection: it conveys an idea that she is petitioning with an earnest agony of grief. St. John is showing or directing the attention of an angel to Christ; the other angel is hiding his face. ANTWERP.

The Virgin's drapery and the sky, being exactly of the same colour, has a bad effect; the linen is remarkably well folded.

Behind the great altar is the chapel of the family of the Burgo-master Rockox, the altar of which is St. Thomas's Incredulity, by Rubens. The head of the Christ is rather a good character, but the body and arms are heavy:—it has been much damaged. On the inside of the two folding doors are portraits of the Burgo-master and his wife, half lengths: his is a fine portrait; the ear is remarkably well painted, and the anatomy of the forehead is well understood. Her portrait has no merit but RUBENS.

ANTWERP. that of colour. Vandyck likewise has painted a portrait of Rockox, a print of which is in his book of heads of eminent men. It should seem that he was a great patron of the arts: he gave to this church the picture of the great altar, which has been already mentioned.

VANDYCK. Here is a whole length of Alexander Scaglia, which appears to be of Vandyck. It is at too great a distance to determine with certainty in regard to its originality. I have seen a print of this picture.

## CAPUCHINS.

W. KOEBERGER. On entering on the right hand is an altar by W. Koeberger; angels supporting a dead Christ. It has merit, but not equal to his picture at Brussels: the outline is not enough undulating or flowing.

RUBENS. The apparition of the Virgin to St. Francis, by Rubens. St. Francis is on his knees receiving the Infant Christ from his mother: angels above, and another figure behind. The Virgin and Christ are

in a wretched hard manner, and the characters are vulgar: there is indeed nothing excellent in this picture but the head of St. Francis, and that is exquisite. The entire picture is engraved by Zoutman. There is a print of the head of St. Francis alone by Cor. Vischer. ANTWERP.

In the following chapel is an altar by Backereel: the apparition of the Virgin appearing to St. Felix and another Friar. This is a successful imitation of Vandyck; the head of the Friar is excellent. BACKEREEL.

The great altar is the same subject as that of the Recollets: Christ between the two thieves: this is likewise by Rubens. RUBENS.

On each side hang two whole-lengths of St. Peter and St. Paul, not much to be admired on any account; they have not even harmony of colouring. St. Peter's yellow drapery does not unite sufficiently with its ground, which is of a cold colour: and that of St. Paul, RUBENS.

ANTWERP. which is purple, unites too much with its ground, which is a blue sky: this gives a heavy appearance to the picture. Whenever one sees a picture of Rubens that wants union, it may be justly suspected that it has been in the hand of some picture cleaner, by whom it has been retouched. These two figures are engraved in one print, by Rem. Eynhovedts.

### ANNUNCIATION NUNS.

RUBENS. ST. JUSTUS, with two other figures who appear astonished at seeing him with his head in his hands. Of this untoward subject Rubens has made an admirable picture, correctly drawn, and coloured in a more chaste manner than usual. The surprise of the two men is admirably expressed. The union between the figures and the ground is in the highest perfection. Some horsemen are seen at a distance in very spirited attitudes. Every part of this picture is touched in such a style, that

it may be considered as a pattern for imitation.—Engraved by J. Witdonck. ANTWERP.

An altar; St. Francis in ecstacy, by Segers. The head and attitude of the Saint are well imagined; he is turning his head, as if he had been looking up to heaven; but the eyes are closed. SEGERS.

Another altar;—two angels, bearing a linen cloth, on which is the face of Christ, called Veronica; a good imitation of Vandyck, by Langen Jan. LANGEN JAN.

THE CHURCH OF BEQUINAGE.

The great altar; a Pieta, by Vandyck. The Christ is not, as usual, supported on the Virgin's knees; Mary Magdalen is kissing his hand: St. John behind, as if bringing in a garment. The Virgin's head is admirable for drawing and expression. The figure of Christ is likewise finely drawn, every part carefully determined, but the colouring of this figure, and indeed of the picture in general, is a little VANDYCK.

ANTWERP. too cold; there is likewise something defective in one of the hands of the Virgin. I have the study which Vandyck made for the Christ.—There are too prints, by Pontius and Sneyers.

JORDAENS. A Crucifixion by J. Jordaens; one of his best coloured pictures. The head of the Christ is lost in the shade, which perhaps was not ill-judged, unless he could have succeeded better in the St. John and the Magdalen, which are abominable characters.

RUCKHORST, *alias* LANGEN JAN. The Ascension by Ruckhorst, *alias*, Langen Jan; extremely well coloured, in the manner of Vandyck.

THE CHURCH OF ST. JAMES.

HENRY VAN BALEN. ON the first pillar on the right as you enter the great door, is the Resurrection, by Van Balen, in the style of Rubens; it is his best work; above are the portraits of himself and his wife.

SCHUT. A Pieta by C. Schut, well drawn and

coloured, something in the manner of Rubens. ANTWERP.

Behind the choir is the chapel of the family of Rubens. The subject of the altar is the Virgin and Infant Christ, St. Jerome, St. George, Mary Magdalen, and other Saints, male and female. Under the character of St. George, it is supposed, is Rubens's own portrait; and Mary Magdalen and the Saint near her, are said to be the portraits of his two wives. For effect of colours this yields to none of Rubens's works, and the characters have more beauty than is common with him. RUBENS.

To a painter who wishes to become a colourist, or learn the art of producing a brilliant effect, this picture is as well worth the studying as any in Antwerp; it is as bright as if the sun shone on it.—There are two prints of this picture, one by P. Pontius, and the other by Rem. Eynhovedts; the last has more of the effect of the picture.

ANTWERP. The Last Judgement, by Van Heem-
VAN HEEMSEN. sen. It has no effect from the figures not being disposed in groups, and from the light being equally dispersed over the picture. On the doors are portraits; on one side the father with four sons, on the other the mother with ten daughters, and a tall figure with a sword, probably St. Catharine. The old woman looks pleased, and is a very natural countenance; all of them are handsome, and admirably drawn: but the manner is very dry, like that of Holbein. The old Gothick school succeeds much better in portraits than history; the reason is plain; imitating exactly what we see in nature, makes but a poor historical picture, but an admirable portrait.

## THE ACADEMY OF PAINTERS.

RUBENS. WE found here an Holy Family, by Rubens, which is far from being one of his best pictures; it is that in which there is a parrot on the pedestal of a pillar, biting vine tendrils. By what

accident this picture came here I never heard: it is scarce worthy to be considered as a pattern for imitation, though it must be acknowledged to be as well as many others of Rubens, which are dispersed about the world: its merit consists solely in being well coloured. It is not by such pictures Rubens acquired his reputation.——A print by Bolswert. ANTWERP.

Here is a good portrait of a priest, by Vandyck, and the portraits of Francis Floris, and Quintin Matsys, by themselves. There are likewise some ordinary pictures of Otho Venius, Jordaens, Schut, and other less considerable painters: the Academy therefore is scarce worth seeing for any excellency in works of art. Here is shown Rubens's chair with his name on it. VANDYCK. F. FLORIS. QUINTIN MATSYS. OTHO VENIUS. JORDAENS. SCHUT.

The Cabinets make but a very inconsiderable figure in Antwerp, in comparison of what is to be found in the churches. Those of M. Peters and

ANTWERP. M. Dasch are two of the most considerable.

## THE CABINET OF M. PETERS.

RUBENS. A ROMAN Charity by Rubens, in his very best manner: the woman who is suckling her father is one of his most beautiful heads, and it has likewise great expression.

RUBENS. The inside of a stable by Rubens, in which he has introduced the Prodigal Son feeding with hogs: the whole has too much of a monotony; there wants variety of colours.

RUBENS. The unbelieving Priest, and another figure, attending at the altar, by Rubens; it is about half-life; of great harmony of colouring.

RUBENS. A Chancellor of Brabant, and another half-length, by Rubens.

VANDYCK. Three whole-lengths by Vandyck.

A half-length portrait, by Vandyck, of a lady gathering flowers; she is turning her back, and looking over her shoulder, with a very genteel air. ANTWERP. VANDYCK.

St. John preaching in the wilderness, by Mola. MOLA.

## THE CABINET OF M. DASCH.

AT Mr. Dasch's is an admirable picture of Rubens; the story of Seleucus and Stratonice. The languishing air of the son, who is lying on a bed, is eminently beautiful: the whole is well composed. RUBENS.

A woman with a black veil, and a gentleman, by Rubens; both fine portraits, especially the woman. RUBENS.

Two Rembrandts, but not in his best style. REMBRANDT.

Opposite to the Rubens, is a Jupiter and Antiope, by Vandyck, (his first manner,) in perfect preservation. I VANDYCK.

ANTWERP. think it is impossible for colours to exceed this picture in brilliancy.

CABINET OF M. VAN HAVEREN.

RUBENS. M. VAN HAVEREN has an admirable portrait by Rubens, known by the name of Chapeau de Paile, from her having on her head a hat and feather, airily put on; it has a wonderful transparency of colour, as if seen in the open air: it is upon the whole a very striking portrait; but her breasts are as ill drawn as they are finely coloured.

VANDYCK. Its companion, though equally well painted, from not having the same advantage of dress receives no attention.

MR. STEVENS'S CABINET.

RUBENS. We must not forget a fine portrait of a gentleman by Rubens which we saw at the house of Mr. Stevens. And at the house of

M. LE CHANOINE VAN PARYS.

a portrait of Helena Forman, (Kitcat,)

by Rubens; it is beautifully coloured, but a painter would say tamely painted, from the long continued lines of the eyes and mouth: this however appears only on a close inspection: for at a distance it seems perfectly well drawn, and an animated countenance; the hands are across, or rather one over the other, finely coloured and drawn; the ends of the fingers a little too thick for a fine hand: she is dressed in black with slashed sleeves. ANTWERP.

THE CABINET OF M. DIRXENS.

JUDAS betraying Christ, by Vandyck: it is in his first manner, but not equal to others which I have seen of that age; the colouring is disagreeable from being too red. VANDYCK.

AT MADAM BOSCHAERTS.

THE Rape of the Sabines, by Rubens is finely coloured and well composed. This picture is to be sold, if any body chooses to give for it 22,000 guilders, RUBENS.

ANTWERP. about two thousand two hundred pounds.

TAKING leave of Flanders, we bade adieu at the same time to History Painting. Pictures are no longer the ornament of churches, and perhaps for that reason no longer the ornament of private houses. We naturally acquire a taste for what we have frequently before our eyes. No great historical picture is put up, which excites the curiosity of the town to see, and tempts the opulent to procure as an ornament to his own house: nothing of this kind being seen, historical paintings are not thought of, and go out of fashion; and the genius of the country, which, if room were given it, would expand itself, is exercised in small curious high-finished cabinet pictures.

It is a circumstance to be regretted, by painters at least, that the Protestant countries have thought proper to exclude

pictures from their churches: how far this circumstance may be the cause that no Protestant country has ever produced a history-painter, may be worthy of consideration.

When we separated from the Church of Rome, many customs, indifferent in themselves, were considered as wrong, for no other reason, perhaps, but because they were adopted by the Communion from which we separated. Among the excesses which this sentiment produced, may be reckoned the impolitick exclusion of all ornaments from our churches. The violence and acrimony with which the separation was made, being now at an end, it is high time to assume that reason of which our zeal seemed to have bereaved us. Why religion should not appear pleasing and amiable in its appendages; why the house of GOD should not appear as well ornamented and as costly as any private house made for man, no good reason I believe can be assigned. This truth is acknowledged,

in regard to the external building, in Protestant as well as in Roman Catholick countries: churches are always the most magnificent edifices in every city: and why the inside should not correspond with its exterior, in this and every other Protestant country, it would be difficult for Protestants to state any reasonable cause.

Many other causes have been assigned, why history painting has never flourished in this country; but with such a reason at hand we need not look farther. Let there be buyers, who are the true Mæcenases, and we shall soon see sellers, vying with each other in the variety and excellence of their works. To those who think that wherever genius is, it must, like fire, blaze out, this argument is not addressed; but those who consider it not as a gift, but a power acquired by long labour and study, should reflect that no man is likely to undergo the fatigue required to carry any art to any degree of excellence, to which after he

has done, the world is likely to pay no attention.

Sculpture languishes for the same reason, being not with us made subservient to our religion, as it is with the Roman Catholicks. Almost the only demand for considerable works of sculpture arises from the monuments erected to eminent men. It is to be regretted that this circumstance does not produce such an advantage to the art as it might do, if, instead of Westminster-Abbey, the custom were once begun of having monuments to departed worth erected in St. Paul's Cathedral. Westminster-Abbey is already full; and if the House of Commons should vote another monument at the publick expence, there is no place, no proper place certainly, in the Abbey, in which it can be placed. Those which have been lately erected, are so stuck up in odd holes and corners, that it begins to appear truly ridiculous: the principal places have been long occupied, and the difficulty of finding a

new nook or corner every year increases. While this Gothick structure is encumbered and overloaded with ornaments which have no agreement or correspondence with the taste and style of the building, St. Paul's looks forlorn and desolate, or at least destitute of ornaments suited to the magnificence of the fabrick. There are places designed by Sir Christopher Wren for monuments, which might become a noble ornament to the building, if properly adapted to their situations. Some parts might contain busts, some single figures, some groups of figures, some bas-reliefs, and some tablets with inscriptions only, according to the expence intended by him who should cause the monument to be erected. All this might be done under the direction of the Royal Academy, who should determine the size of the figures, and where they should be placed, so as to be ornamental to the building*.

* Our author considered the plan which he has here sketched, as likely to be extremely beneficial to the Arts, and was so desirous that it should be

## THE HAGUE.

PASSING by Dort, Rotterdam, and Delft, where we saw no pictures, we proceeded to the Hague. The principal collection here is in the gallery of the Prince of Orange, in which are many excellent pictures, principally of the Dutch school.

### GALLERY OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

HERE are many of the best works of Wouvermans, whose pictures are well

WOUVERMANS.

carried into execution, that after it had been determined to erect a monument to Dr. Johnson in Westminster-Abbey, and a place had been assigned for that purpose, he exerted all his influence with his friends, to induce them to relinquish the scheme proposed, and to consent that the monument of that excellent man should be erected in St. Paul's; where it has since been placed.—In conformity with these sentiments, our author was buried in that cathedral; in which, I trust, Monuments to him, and to his illustrious friend, Mr, Burke, will ere long be erected. M.

HAGUE. worthy the attention and close examination of a Painter. One of the most remarkable of them is known by the name of THE HAY-CART: another in which there is a coach and horses, is equally excellent. There are three pictures hanging close together in his three different manners: his middle manner is by much the best; the first and last have not that liquid softness which characterises his best works. Beside his great skill in colouring, his horses are correctly drawn, very spirited, of a beautiful form, and always in unison with their ground. Upon the whole, he is one of the few painters, whose excellence in his way is such as leaves nothing to be wished for.

REMBRANDT. A study of a Susanna, for the picture by Rembrandt, which is in my possession: it is nearly the same action, except that she is here sitting. This is the third study I have seen for this figure. I have one myself, and the third was in the possession of the late Mr. Blackwood.

In the drawing which he made for this picture; which I have, she is likewise sitting; in the picture she is on her legs, but leaning forward. It appears very extraordinary that Rembrandt should have taken so much pains, and have made at last so very ugly and ill-favoured a figure; but his attention was principally directed to the colouring and effect, in which it must be acknowledged he has attained the highest degree of excellence. HAGUE.

A picture of Dutch gallantry, by Mieris. Mieris; a man pinching the ear of a dog which lies on his mistress's lap. MIERIS.

A boy blowing bubbles. MIERIS.

Two Vandeveldes. VANDEVELDE.

Two portraits, Kitcat size, by Rubens, of his two wives; both fine portraits, but Eleanor Forman is by far the most beautiful, and the best coloured. RUBENS.

A portrait by Vandyck of Simon the VANDYCK.

HAGUE. painter. This is one of the very few pictures that can be seen of Vandyck, which is in perfect preservation; and on examining it closely it appeared to me a perfect pattern of portrait-painting: every part is distinctly marked, but with the lightest hand, and without destroying the breadth of light: the colouring is perfectly true to nature, though it has not the brilliant effect of sun-shine, such as is seen in Rubens's wife: it is nature seen by common day-light.

REMBRANDT. A portrait of a young man by Rembrandt, dressed in a black cap and feathers, the upper part of the face overshadowed: for colouring and force nothing can exceed it.

HOLBEIN. A portrait by Holbein; admirable for its truth and precision, and extremely well coloured. The blue flat ground which is behind the head, gives a general effect of dryness to the picture: had the ground been varied, and made to harmonise more with the figure, this

portrait might have stood in competition with the works of the best portrait-painters. On it is written,—"Henry Chessman, 1533." HAGUE.

A whole-length portrait of Charles the First, about a foot long, dressed in black, the crown and globe lying on the table, tolerably well painted by Henry Pott, a name I am unacquainted with:—the date on it 1632*. HENRY POTT.

The flight into Egypt, by Vanderwerf; one of his best: the back-ground is much cracked, an accident not unfrequent in his pictures. VANDERWERF.

A conversation by Terburg, a woman sitting on the ground leaning her elbow TERBURG.

* Henry Pott, according to Descamps, was of Harlem, and drew portraits of the King and Queen of England, and of the principal nobility; but at what time is not specified. Lord Orford, (ANECD. OF PAINT. iii. 293, 8vo.) suggests that he probably drew Charles II. in his exile; but the date here given shews that he was in England in the early part of his father's reign.

HAGUE. on a man's knee, and resting her head on her hand.

TENIERS. A kitchen by Teniers.

OSTADE. Two Ostades.

RUBENS. A landscape by Rubens; light and airy. It is engraved amongst the set of prints of Rubens's landscapes; it is that where two men are sawing the trunk of a tree.

VANDYCK. The Virgin and Christ, by Vandyck, coloured in the manner of Rubens; so much so, as to appear at first sight to be of his hand; but the character of the child shows it to be Vandyck's.

POUSSIN. Venus asleep on the bank of a canal, her reflection seen in the water; a satyr drawing off the drapery; two Cupids: she is lying with her back upwards.

POTTER. Cattle, finely painted by Potter, re-

markable for the strong reflection of one of them in the water: dated 1648. HAGUE.

Two pictures of flowers and fruits with animals by Brueghel; one serves for a border to a bad portrait; the other to a picture of Rothenamer: the frames are much better than the pictures. BRUEGHEL.

The inside of Delft church by Hoogest, in which is represented the tomb of William Prince of Orange; it is painted in the manner of Dewit, but I think better: dated 1651. HOOGEST.

Fruit by De Heem; done with the utmost perfection. DE HEEM.

A portrait of a lady, with a feather in her hand, by Vandyck; of which there is a print. VANDYCK.

A woman with a candle, by Gerard Dow: engraved by Captain Baillie. GERARD DOW.

A woman writing, looking up, METZU.

HAGUE. and speaking to another person; by Metzu.

JAN STEEN. Here are many of Jan Steen, excellently well painted, but I think they have less character and expression than is usual in his pictures.

There are some large pictures which take up too much room in this small gallery, more than their merit gives them any claim to; among which is a very large picture of Adam and Eve, said to be of Andrea Sacchi, which has been so much repaired, that no judgement can be formed who is the author.

SNYDERS. A large hunting by Snyders, well painted, but it occupies too much space. His works, from the subjects, their size, and we may add, from their being so common, seem to be better suited to a hall or ante-room, than any other place.

## THE HOUSE IN THE WOOD.

IN the house in the Wood, about a

mile out of town, we saw no pictures except those in the hall, which is painted on every side; and every recess and corner has some allegorical story, by Jordaens, Van Tulden, Lievens, or Honthorst. The different hands that have been here employed, make variety, it is true; but it is VARIETY OF WRETCHEDNESS. A triumphal entry, by Jordaens, is the best, and this is but a confused business; the only part which deserves any commendation is, the four horses of the chariot, which are well painted: it is remarkable that the fore-leg of each of the horses is raised, which gives them the formality of trained soldiers.

HAGUE. JORDAENS. VAN TULDEN. LIEVENS. HONTHORST.

GREFFIER FAGEL.

CHARLES the First, the same as that in the gallery of the Prince: to this is added the Queen, and a child sitting on the table; the child is admirable.

H. POTT.

A man driving cattle.

BERGHEM.

HAGUE. TERBURG. A girl receiving a letter from an old woman.

GERARD DOW. A woman asleep, a man putting aside her handkerchief; another laughing.

BROWER. A family, by Brower.

TENIERS. A chymist, by Teniers.

VANDYCK. A portrait of a lady, by Vandyck.

The Greffier has likewise a large and choice collection of drawings, many of which were bought in England, as appears from the marks of Sir Peter Lely and Richardson; and those are in general much superior to what he purchased from Baron Stosck.

THE CABINET OF M. VAN HECHEREN.

OSTADE. Two pictures by Ostade.

A Berghem.

Two of I. Steen. HAGUE.

A Vanderheyden.

A Wouvermans.

Birds small, mushrooms and weeds. HONDER-KOOTER.

Flowers by Huysum, Mignon, and De Heem; the last is the best.

A skirmish, where there is a mill on fire; admirable. WOUVER-MANS.

A Vanderwerf.

A Metzu.

A sketch of Rubens; Christ carrying the Cross. RUBENS.

A Bega, and a Polemburg.

A figure in white sattin, by Terburg.

A Landscape, by Paul Potter; the animals admirably painted, the trees too much like wire. PAUL POTTER.

A Du Jardin.

AMSTERDAM.

## AMSTERDAM.—THE STADTHOUSE.

VANDER-HELST.

THE best picture in this house is painted by Vander Helst. It represents a company of trained bands, about thirty figures, whole-length; among which the Spanish Ambassador is introduced shaking hands with one of the principal figures. This is perhaps the first picture, of portraits, in the world, comprehending more of those qualities which make a perfect portrait, than any other I have ever seen: they are correctly drawn, both heads and figures, and well coloured; and have great variety of action, characters and countenances, and those so lively and truly expressing what they are about, that the spectator has nothing to wish for. Of this picture I had before heard great commendations; but it as far exceeded my expectation, as that of Rembrandt fell below it. So far indeed am I from thinking that this last picture deserves its great reputation, that it was with difficulty I could persuade myself that it was painted by

Rembrandt; it seemed to me to have more of the yellow manner of Boll. The name of Rembrandt, however, is certainly upon it, with the date, 1642. It appears to have been much damaged, but what remains seems to be painted in a poor manner. There are here many more large pictures of the same kind, with thirty or forty heads in each; they are as old as the time of Holbein, in his manner, and many of them nearly as well painted. I wished to learn the names of the artists, as they are doubtless the works of painters well known in the history of the art; but I could get no information. AMSTERDAM.

A Frize over one of the doors in chiaro oscuro, by De Witt, is not only one of the best deceptions I have seen, but the boys are well drawn; the cieling and side of the room in colours are likewise by him, but a poor performance. The academy of painting is a part of this immense building: in it are two admirable pictures, composed entirely of por- DE WITT.

AMSTERDAM. REMBRANDT. VANDER HELST.

traits: one by Rembrandt, and the other by Bartholomew Vander Helst. That of Rembrandt contains six men dressed in black; one of them who has a book before him, appears to have been reading a lecture; the top of the table not seen. The heads are finely painted, but not superior to those of his neighbour. The subject of Vander Helst is the society of archers bestowing a premium: they appear to be investing some person with an order. The date on this is 1657; on the Rembrandt 1661.

## THE WHARF OFFICE.

VANDERVELDE.

AT the office of the Commissary of the Wharfs is one of Vandervelde's most capital pictures: it is about twelve feet long; a view of the Port of Amsterdam, with an infinite quantity of shipping.

## SURGEONS' HALL.

REMBRANDT.

THE Professor Tulpius dissecting a corpse which lies on the table, by Rembrandt. To avoid making it an object disagreeable to look at, the figure is

but just cut at the wrist. There are seven other portraits coloured like nature itself, fresh and highly finished. One of the figures behind has a paper in his hand, on which are written the names of the rest: Rembrandt has also added his own name, with the date, 1672. The dead body is perfectly well drawn, (a little foreshortened,) and seems to have been just washed. Nothing can be more truly the colour of dead flesh. The legs and feet, which are nearest the eye, are in shadow: the principal light, which is on the body, is by that means preserved of a compact form. All these figures are dressed in black. AMSTERDAM.

Above stairs is another Rembrandt, of the same kind of subject; Professor Deeman standing by a dead body, which is so much foreshortened, that the hands and the feet almost touch each other: the dead man lies on his back with his feet towards the spectator. There is something sublime in the character of the head, which reminds one of Michael REMBRANDT.

AMSTERDAM. Angelo; the whole is finely painted, the colouring much like Titian.

## THE CABINET OF MR. HOPE.

HONDERHOOTER. Two swans, ducks, and peacocks; admirable.

J. STEEN. Merry making, two of the figures dancing.

WEENINX WEENINX. A dead swan, and dead hare: perfect every way; beyond Hondecooter.

An excellent Vanderheyden.

A Du Jardin; like Potter, but better than that which hangs below it.

Two little beautiful Vanderveldes.

A Rothenamer.

OSTADE. Three figures, very natural: by Ostade.

GERARD DOW. A woman asleep; a figure tickling her nose; a man lighting his pipe; a lantern, and a woman with a candle, behind.

The Virgin in the clouds, surrounded with angels, by Vandyck. AMSTERDAM. VANDYCK.

Cattle and a shepherd, by Albert Cuyp, the best I ever saw of him; and the figure is likewise better than usual: but the employment which he has given the shepherd in his solitude is not very poetical: it must, however, be allowed to be truth and nature; he is catching fleas or something worse. ALBERT CUYP.

A Vandervelde. VANDERVELDE.

A Terburg. A lady playing on a guitar, dressed as usual in a white sattin petticoat, and a red gown edged with ermine. TERBURG.

A Wouvermans.—A Gabriel Metzu.—A Berghem.—A Metzu.

Dead game, small, by P. Gyzen; highly finished, and well coloured. GYZEN.

A Wouvermans, the best I ever saw. A gentleman and lady on horseback; he has an umbrella in his hand, and he WOUVERMANS.

AMSTERDAM. is talking to another horseman who has his hat off: a man before them playing on a bagpipe, followed by a man and woman dancing; behind, at a distance, other figures dancing to another musician, who stands elevated against a great tree.

A. VANDERVELDE. A Landscape by Adrian Vandervelde; very fine.

VANDER HEYDEN. A View of a church by Vander Heyden, his best; two black friars going up steps. Notwithstanding this picture is finished as usual very minutely, he has not forgot to preserve, at the same time, a great breadth of light. His pictures have very much the effect of nature, seen in a camera obscura.

The inside of the great church at Antwerp, by Peter Neefs.

A. VANDERVELDE. A Landscape by Adrian Vandervelde; the outside of a garden: the highest and most successfully finished picture that perhaps there is in the world, of this painter; it is beautifully coloured, and

has vast force. The cattle are finely drawn, and in very difficult attitudes. AMSTERDAM.

A view of Campo Vaccino, by Linglebach. LINGLEBACH.

The death of Cleopatra, by Lairesse. LAIRESSE. Her figure is well drawn, and in an attitude of great grace; but the style is degraded by the naturalness of the white sattin, which is thrown over her. A woman lies dead at the feet of the bed. This picture is as highly finished as a Vanderwerf, but in a much better style, excepting the drapery, which is not equal to Vanderwerf. Vanderwerf painted what may be truly called drapery; this of Lairesse is not drapery, it is white sattin.

A dead stag, by Weeninx. WEENINX.

An oyster-feast by J. Steen, in which is introduced an excellent figure of old Mieris, standing with his hands behind him. J. STEEN.

A woman reading a letter; the milk-woman who brought it, is in the mean METZU.

AMSTERDAM. time drawing a curtain, a little on one side, in order to see the picture under it, which appears to be a sea-view.

BACKHUYSEN. A large and capital picture of Backhuysen.

VANDERWERF. Three pictures of Vanderwerf; a Magdalen, Lot and his daughters, Christ and St. Thomas. The drapery of St. Thomas is excellent; the folds long continued unite with each other, and are varied with great art.

G. DOW. A woman at a window with a hare in her hand; bright colouring, and well drawn: a dead cock, cabbage, and carrots, lying before her. The name of Gerard Dow is written on the lantern which hangs on one side. The space under the window is filled with the bas-relief of boys with a goat, which he so often painted, after Fiamingo. This part is at least equally well painted with the figure.

MIERIS. An old man by Mieris, with a glass of wine and shrimps on the table: a

woman behind, scoring the reckoning; a fiddle lying in the window. AMSTERDAM.

Christ asleep in the storm, by Rembrandt. In this picture there is a great effect of light, but it is carried to a degree of affectation. REMBRANDT.

The Assumption of the Virgin, by Vandyck; a faint picture, at least it appears so in comparison of those contiguous: it unluckily hangs near a Rembrandt. She is surrounded by little angels; one of them is peeping archly at you under a bundle of drapery, with which he has covered himself: this comicalnes is a little out of its place.—There is a print by Vorsterman. VANDYCK.

## THE CABINET OF M. GART.

THIS house is full of pictures, from the parlour to the upper story. We begin at the top.

Two fine pictures of Terburg; the white sattin remarkably well painted. TERBURG.

AMSTERDAM. He seldom omitted to introduce a piece of white sattin in his pictures. As I reprobated the white sattin in the picture of the death of Cleopatra by Lairesse, and make no objection here, it must be remembered that the subject of Lairesse's picture is heroick, and he has treated it in the true historical style, in every respect, except in his white sattin: but in such pictures as Terburg painted, the individuality and naturalness of the representation makes a considerable part of the merit.

WEENINX. Dead swans by Weeninx, as fine as possible. I suppose we did not see less than twenty pictures of dead swans by this painter.

WOUVERMANS. A Harvest, by Wouvermans.

VANDER HEYDEN. A Canal, by Vanderheyden, highly finished, and finely coloured.

J. STEEN. Snick and Snee, by Jan Steen.

A butcher's shop, an ox hanging up, opened, by Rembrandt: a woman looking over a hatch, so richly coloured, that it makes all the rest of the picture seem dry. AMSTERDAM.

The pillaging of a village by Turks, a soldier driving off the cattle; well composed and finely coloured. WEENINX.

A trumpeter at a window, by G. Dow; his face in shadow; his hand receives the principal light: admirably drawn and coloured. G. DOW.

St. Peter and St. Paul curing the lame man, by Eeckhout. Some parts of this picture are so exactly like Rembrandt, that a connoisseur might without disgrace at first sight mistake it for his. EECKHOUT.

An old woman with a large book before her, looking up at a bird in a cage, by Metzu: one of the best of this master. G. METZU.

Travellers resting on the road, their WOUVERMANS.

AMSTERDAM. galled horses grazing by them: a Wouvermans.

HONDEKOETER. Two Hondekoeters.

VANDERHELST. A conversation of portraits, by Vanderhelst.

VANDERVELDE. Cattle, by Adrian Vandervelde.

JORDAENS. Bacchanalians, by Jordaens.

J. STEEN. Drinking and gaming, by J. Steen, a large composition of about twenty figures, well drawn and coloured: one of the women who has thrown her leg over a bagpipe-player, has a great degree of beauty.

TENIERS. Two Teniers; guard-rooms.

A Paul Potter.

Another Jan Steen.

VAN DE HENDE. Still-life, by Van de Hende, a wonderful instance of patience in finishing, particularly a globe, on which is seen the map of Europe.

Flowers, by V. Huysum.

A Bamboccio. AMSTERDAM.

An admirable portrait by Rubens.

A portrait, by Frank Hals.

A portrait, by Rembrandt.

THE CABINET OF MR. LE BRUN.

DEAD hare, &c. by Weeninx.

Tobias taking leave of his father: his mother with a spinning-wheel. VICTOR, *school of* RUBENS.

A fresh gale, by Everdingen; like Backhuysen, but the light mellower. EVERDINGEN.

A woman pouring milk from one vessel to another: by D. Vandermeere. D. VANDERMEERE

Cattle by Vander Does; admirable, with great facility. VANDERDOES

A nativity, by Polemberg. POLEMBERG.

A Linglebach, a Vanderheyden, and a Crabache.

A group of ships, by Vandervelde; a calm: admirable. VANDERVELDE

Flower pieces, by Rachael Roos. RACHAEL ROOS.

AMSTERDAM. BERKHEYDEN. A view of a country house, by Berkheyden: a little harder than Vanderheyden.

C. MATATTI. St. John writing the Apocalypse; two boy angels; the Virgin in the clouds. It is a rare instance to see an Italian picture here.

TERBURG. Portraits of Terburg and his wife, small whole-lengths.

J. STEEN. A woman with a child sucking, a boy beating a drum; behind, figures drinking: over a door is written—SALUS PATRIÆ, with Jan Steen's name in gold letters. There is great force in this picture.

WOUVERMANS. The pillaging of a village, by Wouvermans.

P. HOOGT. Inside of a room, with a woman and child. Its companion, a woman sweeping.

THE account which has now been given of the Dutch pictures is, I confess, more barren of entertainment, than I expected. One would wish to be able to convey to the reader some idea of that excellence, the sight of which has afforded so much pleasure: but as their merit often consists in the truth of representation alone, whatever praise they deserve, whatever pleasure they give when under the eye, they make but a poor figure in description. It is to the eye only that the works of this school are addressed; it is not therefore to be wondered at, that what was intended solely for the gratification of one sense, succeeds but ill, when applied to another. DUTCH SCHOOL.

A market-woman with a hare in her hand, a man blowing a trumpet, or a boy blowing bubbles, a view of the inside or outside of a church, are the subjects of some of their most valuable pictures; but there is still entertain-

Dutch School.

ment, even in such pictures: however uninteresting their subjects, there is some pleasure in the contemplation of the truth of the imitation. But to a painter they afford likewise instruction in his profession; here he may learn the art of colouring and composition, a skilful management of light and shade, and indeed all the mechanical parts of the art, as well as in any other school whatever. The same skill which is practised by Rubens and Titian in their large works, is here exhibited, though on a smaller scale. Painters should go to the Dutch school to learn the art of painting, as they would go to a grammar school to learn languages. They must go to Italy to learn the higher branches of knowledge.

We must be contented to make up our idea of perfection from the excellencies which are dispersed over the world. A poetical imagination, expression, character, or even correctness of drawing, are seldom united with that

power of colouring, which would set off those excellencies to the best advantage: and in this, perhaps, no school ever excelled the Dutch. An artist, by a close examination of their works, may in a few hours make himself master of the principles on which they wrought, which cost them whole ages, and perhaps the experience of a succession of ages, to ascertain. Dutch School.

The most considerable of the Dutch school are, Rembrandt, Teniers, Jan Steen, Ostade, Brouwer, Gerard Dow, Mieris, Metzu, and Terburg: these excel in small conversations. For landscapes and cattle, Wouvermans, P. Potter, Berchem, and Ruysdaal; and for buildings, Vanderheyden. For sea-views, W. Vandervelde, jun. and Backhuysen. For dead-game, Weeninx and Hondekoeter. For flowers, De Heem, Vanhuysum, Rachael Roos, and Brueghel. These make the bulk of the Dutch school.

DUTCH SCHOOL.

I consider those painters as belonging to this school, who painted only small conversations, landscapes, &c. Though some of those were born in Flanders, their works are principally found in Holland: and to separate them from the Flemish school, which generally painted figures large as life, it appears to me more reasonable to class them with the Dutch painters, and to distinguish those two schools rather by their style and manner, than by the place where the artist happened to be born.

Rembrandt may be considered as belonging to both or either, as he painted both large and small pictures.

The works of David Teniers, jun. are worthy the closest attention of a painter, who desires to excel in the mechanical knowledge of his art. His manner of touching, or what we call handling, has perhaps never been equalled; there is in his pictures that

exact mixture of softness and sharpness, which is difficult to execute. DUTCH SCHOOL.

Jan Steen has a strong manly style of painting, which might become even the design of Raffaelle, and he has shown the greatest skill in composition, and management of light and shadow, as well as great truth in the expression and character of his figures.

The landscapes of Ruysdaal have not only great force, but have a freshness which is seen in scarce any other painter. What excellence in colouring and handling is to be found in the dead game of Weeninx.

A clearness and brilliancy of colouring may be learned by examining the flower pieces of De Heem, Huysum, and Mignon; and a short time employed in painting flowers would make no improper part of a painter's study. Rubens's pictures strongly remind one of a nosegay of flowers, where all the

DUTCH SCHOOL.

colours are bright, clear, and transparent.

I have only to add, that in this account of the Dutch pictures, which is indeed little more than a catalogue, I have mentioned only those which I considered worthy of attention. It is not to be supposed that those are the whole of the Cabinets described; perhaps in a collection of near a hundred pictures, not ten are set down: their being mentioned at all, therefore, though no epithet may be added, implies excellence.

I have been more particular in the account of Mr. Hope's Cabinet, not only because it is acknowledged to be the first in Amsterdam, but because I had an opportunity (by the particular attention and civility of its possessors) of seeing it oftener, and considering it more at my leisure, than any other collection.

## DUSSELDORP GALLERY.

DUSSEL-DORP.

THIS gallery is under the care of Mr. Lambert Kraye, who likewise is the director of the Academy.

The easy access which you have to this collection of pictures, seeing it as often, and staying in it as long as you please, without appearing to incommode any body, cannot but be very pleasing to strangers, and very advantageous to the students in painting, who seem to have the same indulgence; for we found many copying in the gallery, and others in a large room above stairs, which is allotted for that purpose. I could not help expressing to Mr. Kraye the pleasure I felt, not only at the great conveniency with which I saw the gallery, but likewise at the great indulgence granted to the students. He said it was the Elector's wish to afford the most perfect accommodation to those who visit the collection: but in regard to the students, he took some credit to himself

DUSSELDORP.

in procuring for them that advantage. When he first asked the Elector's leave for students to copy the pictures in the gallery, the Prince refused; and the reason he assigned was, that those copies afterwards would be sold for originals, and thus by multiplying, depreciate the value of the collection. Mr. Kraye answered, that those who could make such copies were not persons who spent their time in copying at all, but made originals of their own invention; that the young students were not likely to make such copies as would pass for originals with any but the ignorant; and that the mistakes of the ignorant were not worth attention: he added, that as his Highness wished to produce artists in his own country, the refusing such advantages to young students would be as unwise, as if a patron of learning, who wished to produce scholars should refuse them the use of a library. The Elector acquiesced, and desired him to do whatever he thought would contribute to advance the art.

DUSSEL-DORP.

## FIRST ROOM.

The first picture which strikes the eye on entering the gallery, is a Merry-making of Jordaens, which is by far the best picture I ever saw of his hand. There is a glow of colours throughout, and vast force; every head and every part perfectly well drawn: vulgar, tumultuous merriment was never better expressed: and for colouring and strength, few pictures of Rubens are superior. There is a little grey about the women's dress; the rest are all warm colours, and strong shades. JORDAENS.

Four whole-length pictures by Van-dyck, all dressed in black; three men and one woman. They are all fine portraits, in his high-finished manner. VANDYCK.

Christ with a cross, receiving the four penitents, Mary Magdalen, Peter, David, and the penitent thief. This picture does no great honour to Vandyck; the head of the Magdalen is badly VANDYCK.

DUSSELDORP.

drawn, and David is but a poor character: he looks as much like a thief, as the thief here represented: the naked arm of Christ is badly drawn; the outline quick and short, not flowing: the only excellence which this picture possesses is the general effect, proceeding from the harmony of colouring.

GASP. DE CRAYER.

Here is an immense picture of Gaspar de Crayer, mentioned not on account of its excellence in my own opinion, but from its being in such high estimation in this country; and it is certainly one of his largest works. Though it cannot be said to be defective in drawing or colouring, yet it is far from being a striking picture. There is no union between his figures and the ground; the outline is every where seen, which takes away the softness and richness of effect: the men are insipid characters, and the women want beauty. The composition is something on the plan of the great picture of Rubens in the St. Augustins at Antwerp: that is, the subject is of

the same kind, but there is a great difference indeed in their degree of merit. The dead and cold effect of this picture, as well as many others of modern masters in this gallery, sets off those of Rubens to great advantage. It would be a profitable study for a young painter to look from those pictures to Rubens, and compare them again and again, till he has investigated and fixed in his mind the cause and principles of such brilliant effects in one instance, and of failure (when there is a failure) in the other. DUSSELDORF.

Dead game, boar and stag-hunting, by Snyders, De Vos, Fytt, and Weeninx: the Weeninx is the most remarkably excellent. SNYDERS, DE VOS, FYTT, WEENINX.

"Take up thy bed and walk," by Vandyck, in the manner of Rubens. This picture appears to be painted about the time when he did that of the four penitents; it has the same defects and the same beauties.—A print by Pontius. VANDYCK.

DUSSELDORP. VALENTINE. Soldiers playing at Moro; a duplicate of one in the gallery of the Duke of Rutland.

VANDYCK. A pieta, by Vandyck, in the manner of Rubens. Mr. Kraye is of opinion that it is painted by Rubens: this difference of opinion among connoisseurs shows sufficiently how much the first manner of Vandyck was like that of Rubens. He is almost the only instance of a successful imitation: however, he afterwards had a manner of his own.

St. John is blubbering in a very ungracious manner. The attitude of the Christ would be admirable, if the head had not so squalid an appearance. The whole figure of Christ is equally light; which, with the help of the white linen on the Virgin's knee, makes a large mass of light: her head and the head of Mary Magdalen make the lesser lights. St. John's drapery, which is a light red, makes the light lose itself by degrees in the ground.

DUSSELDORP.

## SECOND ROOM.

IN the next room are these admirable pictures by Vandyck; St. Sebastian, Susanna, and a Pieta. The first two were done when he was very young, highly coloured, in the same manner as the Jupiter and Antiope at Mr. Dasch's at Antwerp, a picture on the same subject in the possession of Lord Coventry, his own portrait at the Duke of Grafton's, and the portrait of Rubens in my possession: he never afterwards had so brilliant a manner of colouring; it kills every thing near it. Behind are figures on horseback, touched with great spirit. This is Vandyck's first manner, when he imitated Rubens and Titian, which supposes the sun in the room: in his pictures afterwards, he represented the effects of common day light: both were equally true to nature; but his first manner carries a superiority with it, and seizes our attention, whilst the pictures painted in his latter manner run a risk of being overlooked. VANDYCK.

Dussel-dorp. The Pieta is also finely coloured, (though not of that splendid kind,) correctly drawn, and finished with the utmost care and precision.

Vandyck. There are likewise three other pictures of Vandyck in this room; one of them is the Virgin and Child, and St. John; the Virgin looking down on the St. John, who is presenting his label to Christ. The two others are small pictures; the assumption of St. Rosalia, and the Virgin presenting St. Rosalia to the Trinity; both very indifferent performances.

Vandyck. The whole-length portraits of ladies. Of that in black the colours are flown; her face is whiter than her linen.

Amoroso A girl sleeping on the ground, by Amoroso; simple, and natural.

Gerard Dow. But the picture which is most valued here, and which gives name to the room is the Gerard Dow; a Mountebank haranguing from his stage to figures of

different ages, but I cannot add—of different characters: for there is in truth no character in the picture. It is very highly finished, but has nothing interesting in it, Gerard Dow himself is looking from a window with his palette and pencils in his hand. The heads have no character, nor are any circumstances of humour introduced. The only incident is a very dirty one, which every one must wish had been omitted; that of a woman clouting a child. The rest of the figures are standing round, without invention or novelty of any kind. This is supposed to be the largest composition that he ever made, his other works being little more than single figures; and it plainly appears that this was too much for him,—more than he knew how to manage. Even the accessories in the back-ground are ill managed and disproportioned; a stump of a tree is too small, and the weeds are too large; and both are introduced with as much formality as if they were principal ob- DUSSELDORP.

Dusseldorp. jects. Upon the whole the single figure of the woman holding a hare, in Mr. Hope's collection, is worth more than this large picture, in which perhaps there is ten times the quantity of work.

## Third Room

Barocci. Noli me tangere, of Barocci. The figures have not much grace; the Magdalen looks as if she was scratching her head; it is, however, finely coloured. There is a print of this picture.

Raffaelle. A holy family, of Raffaelle: Christ and St. John attending to each other, the Virgin sitting on the ground looking at Elizabeth; St. Joseph behind with both hands on his staff; which all together make a very regular pyramid. The Virgin is beautiful, as are likewise the children: indeed the whole is to be admired; but the colouring has a disagreeable yellow cast: it is in his first manner.

An immense picture of the Ascension of the Virgin, by Carlo Cignani; heavy, and in no point excellent: a proper companion for the large picture of Gaspard de Crayer. DUSSELDORP. CARLO CIGNANI.

Susanna and the two Elders, by Domenichino. She is sitting at a fountain, the two elders are behind a balustrade; her head is fine, as are those of the old men; but it is upon the whole but a poor barren composition. There is as much expression in the Susanna as perhaps can be given, preserving at the same time beauty: but the colour is inclinable to chalk, at least it appears so after looking at the warm splendid colours of Rubens: his full and rich composition makes this look cold and scanty. She is awkwardly placed by herself in the corner of the picture, which appears too large for the subject, the canvass not being sufficiently filled. DOMENICHINO.

Here are many Luca Giordanos, which are composed in a picturesque manner: LUCA GIORDANO.

DUSSELDORP. and some very ordinary pictures of Paolo Veronese.

PAOLO VERONESE.

LUCA GIORDANO. At the further end are two picturesque compositions of Luca Giordano, the Feeding of the Multitude, and the Elevation of the Cross; where he has disposed of a vast mob of people with great skill, in Tintoret's manner; and if they had his, or rather Paul Veronese's colouring, these would be considered as very extraordinary pictures; but there is here a want of briskness and brilliancy of colour: a kind of clay colour seems to predominate in his pictures. When one looks at Luca Giordano, and sees a work well composed, well drawn, and with good keeping, one wonders how he has missed being a great name.

TINTORET. A Crucifixion of Tintoret, with a great number of figures, but ill composed, and full of small spots of light: parts of this picture, however, are not ill painted.

A fine portrait of Vesalius the Anatomist when young, by Tintoret. He has a skirrous bone in his left hand, the other holds a compass: he looks at the spectator with a most penetrating eye. It is apparently the same countenance as the engraved portrait prefixed to his works, but much younger. DUSSELDORP. TINTORET.

Christ putting in the Sepulchre, by Annibal Caracci. This appears to have been one of his best works: it is finely drawn and composed; and the Christ is in graceful attitudes. A. CARACCI.

Under this picture is an ECCE HOMO, a head only; said to be of Correggio; but apparently of Domenico Feti. It should seem by this mistake that there is a resemblance in the manner of Domenico Feti to that of Correggio; what there is, which is very little, lies in the colouring; there is something of a transparent and pearly tint of colour in this head, but the character is much inferior to Correggio: it is in heads or DOMENICO FETI.

DUSSELDORF. small parts of pictures, only, that perhaps some resemblance may be discovered; in the larger works of Domenico Feti nobody can be deceived.

CARLO DOLCI. A Carlo Dolci; Madonna and Bambino with a lily. This is one of his best works: the expression of the Virgin is very beautiful; the Christ, which is a little figure at length, though not excellent, is still better than his children generally are.

LUCA GIORDANO. Two portraits dressed in rags, like beggars, by Luca Giordano, in imitation of Spagnolet's manner; well painted. They are said to be his own and his father's pictures. I have seen a portrait by Caravaggio, painted by himself, in the same style: it is difficult to find out the wit or humour of this conceit of being drawn in the characters of beggars.

C. PROCACCINI. A holy family by Camillo Procaccini, his best; finely coloured: the Christ's head admirable.

St. Jerome, said to be by Paul Veronese, but certainly by Giacomo Bassan. DUSSELDORP. GIACOMO BASSAN.

## FOURTH ROOM.

THE most distinguished pictures in this room are the Vanderwerfs, which are twenty-four in number. Three of them are as large as life; a Magdalen whole-length, and two portraits. The Magdalen was painted as a companion to the St. John of Raffaelle, but it was not thought even by his friends and admirers that he had succeeded: however, he certainly has spared no pains; it is as smooth and as highly finished as his small pictures; but his defects are here magnified, and consequently more apparent. His pictures, whether great or small, certainly afford but little pleasure. Of their want of effect it is worth a painter's while to inquire into the cause. One of the principal causes appears to me, his having entertained an opinion that the light of a picture ought to be thrown solely on the figures, and little or none on the ground or sky. This VANDERWERF.

DUSSELDORP. gives great coldness to the effect, and is so contrary to nature and the practice of those painters with whose works he was surrounded, that we cannot help wondering how he fell into this mistake.

His naked figures appear to be of a much harder substance than flesh, though his outline is far from cutting, or the light not united with the shade, which are the most common causes of hardness; but it appears to me, that in the present instance the hardness of manner proceeds from the softness and union being too general; the light being every where equally lost in the ground or its shadow: for this is not expressing the true effect of flesh, the light of which is sometimes losing itself in the ground, and sometimes distinctly seen, according to the rising or sinking of the muscles: an attention to these variations is what gives the effect of suppleness, which is one of the characteristicks of a good manner of colouring.

There is in nature a certain proportion of bluntness and sharpness; in the medium between those two extremes, the true and perfect art of imitating consists. If the sharp predominate, it gives a dry manner; if the blunt predominate, it makes a manner equally removed from nature; it gives what painters call woolliness and heaviness, or that kind of hardness which is found in those pictures of Vanderwerf. DUSSELDORP.

In describing Vanderwerf's manner, were I to say that all the parts every where melt into each other, it might naturally be supposed that the effect would be a high degree of softness; but it is notoriously the contrary, and I think for the reason that has been given: his flesh has the appearance of ivory, or plaister, or some other hard substance. What contributes likewise to give this hardness, is a want of transparency in this colouring, from his admitting little or no reflexions of light. He has also the defect which is often found in Rembrandt; that of making his light only a

DUSSELDORF. single spot. However to do him justice, his figures and his heads are generally well drawn, and his drapery is excellent; perhaps there are in his pictures as perfect examples of drapery as are to be found in any other painter's works whatever.

REMBRANDT. There are likewise in this room eight Rembrandts; the chief merit of which consists in his peculiarity of manner,—of admitting but little light, and giving to that little a wonderful brilliancy. The colouring of Christ in the Elevation of the Cross, cannot be exceeded; it is exactly the tint of Vandyck's Susanna in the other room; but whether the ground of this picture has been re-painted, or the white horse, which was certainly intended to make the mass of light broader, has lost its brightness, at present the Christ makes a disagreeable string of light.

In reality here are too many Rembrandts brought together: his peculiarity does not come amiss, when mixed with the performances of other artists of more

regular manners; the variety then may contribute to relieve the mind, fatigued with regularity. DUSSELDORP.

The same may be said of the Vanderwerfs: they also are too numerous. These pictures, however, tire the spectator for reasons totally opposite to each other; the Rembrandts have too much salt, and the Vanderwerfs too much water, on neither of which we can live. These Rembrandts are now engraving by———. The storm at Mr. Hope's seems to belong to this set.

A portrait of a Gentleman by Titian, a Kitcat; one hand a-kembo, the hand itself not seen, only a bit of the ruffle; the other, the left, rests on what appears to be his sword; he is looking off. This portrait has a very pleasing countenance, but is not painted with much facility, nor is it at all mannered: the shadows are of no colour; the drapery being black, and the ground being very near as dark as it, prevents the arm a-kembo TITIAN.

DUSSELDORF. from having a bad effect. It is no small part of our art to know what to bring forward in the light, and what to throw into shade.

FLINK. The portraits of Flink and his wife, said to be of Rembrandt, but I think, from the yellow bad taste of colouring, that they are rather by Flink himself.

JORDAENS. The rest of the pictures in this room are but ordinary, if we except a picture by Jordaens, of the Satyr blowing hot and cold, which is equally well painted with the feast above mentioned. He ought never to have attempted higher subjects than satyrs, or animals, or men little above beasts; for he had no idea of grace or dignity of character; he makes therefore a wretched figure in grand subjects. He certainly however, understood very well the mechanical part of the art; his works are generally well coloured, and executed with great freedom of hand.

Over the door, the tribute-money, by Pietro Genoese: the characters as usual, wretched; particularly St. Peter. It is wonderful by what fatality this painter finds his way into great collections: he has no merit in drawing or colouring, that is by any means sufficient to compensate for the meanness and vulgarity of his ideas. DUSSELDORP. PIETRO GENOESE.

A Susanna and the two Elders the same as the Duke of Devonshire's: this likewise appears original. VANDYCK.

A virgin and child, and St. Joseph, by Pietro da Cartona, painted in guazzo; the child is of a red brick colour, and the whole wants harmony. PIETRO DA CORTONA.

The Assumption of the Virgin, said to be by Guido, but it is undoubtedly a copy. It has that regularity of composition, which is frequent with Guido: two large angels and two little angels on each side, and two cherubims, regularly placed in the middle, under the Virgin's GUIDO.

Dusseldorp. feet. This formality is certainly a defect in Guido, however it might become other painters who have adopted a style of more dignity.

Polydore. The upper part of three sides of this room are surrounded with a continued picture in chiaro-oscuro, as large as life, said to be by Polydore; but it is in the wretched taste of Goltzius.

## Fifth Room.

Rubens. The fifth room is furnished almost entirely with the works of Rubens. On the right hand, Silenus with satyrs; one of Rubens's highest coloured pictures, but not superior to that on the same subject at Blenheim. The composition of this varies in many points; the naked Bacchante is here omitted, and there is an addition of a female satyr lying with her children drunk on the ground.

Rubens. The companion is, Diogenes with a lantern, looking for an honest man, among a multitude of insipid half-length

figures: this is not in Rubens's best manner of painting. DUSSELDORP.

The Nativity, with many angels; admirably composed: the nearest shepherd is particularly well drawn and coloured. One of the angels, who has her arms crossed on her breast, with curled hair, like the Antinous, seems to be copied from Parmigiano: it is much out of Rubens's common manner. RUBENS.

Boys by Rubens, playing with or carrying a festoon of fruit, painted by Snyders; some of the boys the same as those in the banquetting-house: it is one of Rubens's best pictures both for colouring and drawing; it is indeed soft and rich as flesh itself. RUBENS, and SNYDERS.

Though the flowers are painted with all that beauty of colour which is in nature, yet Rubens has preserved such brightness and clearness in his flesh, though in contact with those flowers, as perhaps no other painter could

DUSSELDORP. have done. This picture is now engraving by Mr. Schimdz, who is an excellent artist, and there is no doubt of the print's being well done; but more than half its merit must be lost for want of Rubens's colour, though some of the boys, particularly that lying on the ground, are extremely well drawn.

We now come to the last four pictures of Rubens which are in this gallery, and which makes a considerable part of it. Two of these represent the Last Judgement, and the other two the expulsion of the rebel angels.

RUBENS. The largest of these four is the Last Judgement, which almost fills the end of the gallery. There is nothing very interesting in this picture: perhaps there is too great a quantity of flesh to have an agreeable effect. Three naked women and a naked man, join together to make the great mass of light of the picture. One of the women, who is

looking out of the picture, has for that reason the appearance of a portrait, and is said to be one of Rubens's wives; and a figure rising out of a grave, in the foreground, is said to be his own portrait; but certainly neither of these suppositions is well founded. DUSSEL. DORF.

The next large picture is, Michael combating the Fallen Angels.—Michael is but an ungraceful figure; his red mantle has but a heavy appearance; it seems as if it were only laid in flat, to be afterwards finished. The picture has certainly suffered by cleaning: there wants upon the whole a solidity of effect. RUBENS.

The next is called the small Last Judgement. As in the large picture the blessed are the most conspicuous, here the damned make in a manner the subject of the composition: the blessed are faintly represented at a distance in the upper part of the picture, near Christ and the Virgin Mary. This RUBENS.

DUSSELDORP. picture is far superior to the large one on the same subject in every respect.

RUBENS. But there is another picture of the Fallen Angels, of the same size as this, which even exceeds it. It is impossible to form an adequate idea of the powers of Rubens, without having seen this picture: he seems here to have given a loose to the most capricious imagination in the attitudes and invention of his fallen angels, who are tumbling one over the other, "*with hideous ruin and combustion, down to bottomless perdition.*"

If we consider the fruitfulness of invention which is discovered in this work, or the skill which is shown in composing such an infinite number of figures, or the art of the distribution of the light and shadow, the freedom of hand, the facility with which it seems to be performed, and what is still more extraordinary, the correctness and admirable taste of drawing of figures

fore-shortened, in attitudes the most difficult to execute, we must pronounce this picture to be one of the greatest efforts of genius that ever the art has produced. DUSSELDORP.

RUBENS'S ROOM.

HERE are three large pictures; Laban reconciled to his brother, the Ascension of the Virgin and the Cloven Tongues, (both fine compositions,) and St. Lawrence, the same as the print; the colouring of the latter appears raw.

The Battle of the Amazons, (not much larger than the print,) painted in varnish. The woman who lies dead at the bottom, with her head downwards, is beautifully coloured, in the manner of the women in the picture of fallen angels; and though not of a correct form, has a grand free open outline. This appears to be painted at the same time of his life, that he painted the fall of the angels, which is in his best manner: it is a pity that the date is not

DUSSELDORP. known. Its companion is Sampson and Dalila.

A small picture of the fall of St. Paul, much in the same style as his own picture. The horse of St. Paul is in a remarkable fine attitude, and there is great spirit and bustle through the whole picture. Tameness or insipidity is not the character of Rubens: in whatever he employs his figures, they do their business with great energy.

RUBENS and BRUEGHEL. A Madonna and Bambino, by Rubens, with flowers by Brueghel, and eleven boy angels surrounding the garland, who are beautifully coloured, equally brilliant with the flowers.

A landscape with a double rainbow quite across the picture, very slight: the varnish seems to be off this picture likewise.

A finished small picture of the St. Christopher, the same as on the door

of the Descent from the Cross at Antwerp. DUSSELDORP.

Rubens and his wife, when he was a young man, for his portrait here appears not above two or three and twenty: his wife is very handsome, and has an agreeable countenance. She is by much the best part of the picture, which is rather in a hard manner.—The linen is grey: he was at this period afraid of white.

Over the door is a portrait of a lady, whole length, with her hand on a dog's head; a gentleman behind; a boy (her son) by her side, with a hawk, and a dwarf behind the dog. This is called Lord and Lady Arundel, but certainly does not contain their portraits. The arms on the curtain have a lion and unicorn for supporters, and the Garter as a label under.

On the right side is Castor and Pollux, with two horses carrying away two

DUSSELDORP. women: it is a fine piece of colouring, but the composition too artful.

Its companion is, Fame crowning Mars; the Fame is too red, as well as the rest of the picture.

Seneca dying, copied from the statue; it is much to be suspected that this picture was not painted by Rubens. The companion to this is, the four repentant sinners coming to Christ.

The Battle of Senacherib is the companion to the fall of St. Paul. In this picture there is a great repose of shadow in large masses; the figures and horses are full of animation.

About ten portraits by Rubens: the best are, De Ney, a priest, with a skull in his hand, and Dr. Van Tulden in black, holding in his hand a book shut.

Rubens's wife, a head; the same as that at Marlborough house.

Philip the Fourth of Spain, and his Queen. DUSSELDORP.

One of the window-shutters, (if they may be so called,) which open inwardly, on purpose to hang small pictures on them, and turn back like doors, so as to place the pictures on them, in any light, is a portrait, (three quarters,) by Vandyck; dressed in black, looking off, with part of his right hand appearing, which holds his cloak. It is as finely drawn as that which we saw at the Prince of Orange's gallery, in as perfect preservation, and of a brighter tint; more like the colouring of Rubens: it is finished, like enamel: the nose and eyes remarkably finely drawn, and delicately marked. Mr. Kraye told me that there was a print of this portrait by Sandrart, and that he was a worker in silver. VANDYCK.

An ECCE HOMO on another window by Johannes de Hemissen, dated 1544: not mentioned for its excellence, but be- JOHANNES DE HEMISSEN.

Cologne. cause we see many pictures of his, and particularly his children, which are attributed in every collection to Lionardo da Vinci.

## Cologne.

Rubens. St. Peter crucified with his head downwards, by Rubens; painted a little time before his death. The body and head of the Saint are the only good parts in the picture, which is finely coloured, (broad light and shade,) and well drawn; but the figure bends too suddenly from the thighs, which are ill drawn, or rather in a bad taste of drawing; as is likewise his arm, which has a short interrupted outline. The action of the malefactors has not that energy which he usually gave to his figures. Rubens in his letter to Geldorp expresses his own approbation of this picture, which he says was the best he ever painted: he likewise expresses his content and happiness in the subject, as being picturesque: this is likewise natural to such a mind as that of Rubens,

who was perhaps too much looking about him for the picturesque, or some thing uncommon. A man with his head downwards is certainly a more extraordinary object than in its natural place. Many parts of this picture are so feebly drawn, and with so tame a pencil, that I cannot help suspecting that Rubens died before he had completed it, and that it was finished by some of his scholars. COLOGNE.

This picture is of great fame, I suppose from the letter of Rubens, where he says, it was or would be his best work. We went from Dusseldorp to Cologne on purpose to see it; but it by no means recompensed us for our journey. From Cologne we made an excursion to Bernsburgh, a hunting-seat of the Elector Palatine, which we found very different from what we had been taught to expect. The three rooms painted by Weeninx, however excellent in their kind, are not better, nor even so good as what we had seen before of his hand; in WEENINX.

BERNSBURGH.

the gallery of Dusseldorp. His figures as large as life, which he is fond of introducing, are very indifferent, if not bad. His dead game certainly cannot be too much admired; but a sample is enough: here is too much of it. His portraits are such as no one would hang up in his house, if they were not accompanied with his birds and animals.

The Frescos on the walls and ceiling are by Belluci Pellegrino, and other late painters, not worth a minute's attention. We saw a picture of the Slaughter of the Innocents, by old Brueghel, the same as one I had seen before in some part of Holland; and I have another myself. This painter was totally ignorant of all the mechanical art of making a picture; but there is here a great quantity of thinking, a representation of variety of distress, enough for twenty modern pictures. In this respect he is like Donne, as distinguished from the modern versifiers, who carrying no weight of thought, easily fall into that false gallop

of verses which Shakspeare ridicules in "As you like it." COLOGNE.

There is the same difference between the old portraits of Albert Durer or Holbein, and those of the modern painters: the moderns have certainly the advantage in facility, but there is a truth in the old painters, though expressed in a hard manner, that gives them a superiority.

At Cologne, in the possession of one of the family of Jabac, is the famous picture, by Le Brun, containing the portrait of Jabac, his wife and four children*. It is much superior to what I could conceive Le Brun capable of doing in the Portrait style. She is sitting on his left hand, with four children about her, and a greyhound, equally correct and well painted with the rest. Jabac himself is much in shadow, except the LE BRUN.

* This picture is now (1797) in the collection of Mr. Hope, late of Amsterdam. M.

Cologne. face. Le Brun is represented by his picture on a canvass which is placed on an easel: before him lie prints, drawings, port-crayons, and a large gold bust of Alexander. The portraits are equal to the best of Vandyck; but there is a heaviness in the effect of the picture, which Vandyck never had, and this is its only defect.

At Aix la Chapelle,

Rubens. in the church of the Capuchins is the Adorations of the Shepherds, by Rubens; it appears to be much damaged, but it never was a very striking picture.—There is a print of it by——. A Shepherdess, not a very poetical one, is making an offering of an hen's egg to the Virgin, having already given three eggs, which lie by the infant Christ, who is sucking the Virgin: neither of them take any notice of the shepherdess: if the Virgin may be said to be looking at any thing, it is at the egg in the woman's hand. A shepherd with his hand to his hat, as if going to pull it off, appears to

be well painted; and the ox is admirably well done. LIEGE.

St. Francis receiving the *stimata*, seems likewise to be by Rubens, but is not much to be admired.

## LIEGE.

IN the great church is the Ascension of the Virgin, by Lairesse. LAIRESSE. Parts of this picture are well painted, but it has no effect upon the whole, from the want of large masses. His manner is not open, and appears too restrained for large pictures. The same defect is observable in pictures of Poussin, where the figures are as large as life, and in those of Vanderwerf. We are creatures of habit, and a painter cannot change his habits suddenly; he cannot, like the fallen angels of Milton, increase or diminish at pleasure.

Louvain.

## Louvain.

Rubens. Aux Dames blanches.—The Adoration of the Magi, by Rubens; a slight performance. The Virgin holds the Infant but awkwardly, appearing to pinch the thigh. This picture is said to have been painted in eight days, and he was paid for it 800 florins; about 80l. English.—A print by Lauvers. The Virgin and Christ, and the principal of the Magi, are much the same as in my sketch, except that he kneels instead of standing.

In the church of St. Pierre are some pictures of the old masters; one said to be of Quintin Matsys; another, about the same age, representing some Saint, who appears to refuse a mitre, which is placed before him; a composition of near an hundred figures, many in good attitudes, natural and well invented. It is much more entertaining to look at the works of these old masters, than slight

common-place pictures of many modern painters. LOUVAIN.

## CHARACTER OF RUBENS.

CHARACTER OF RUBENS.

THE works of men of genius alone, where great faults are united with great beauties, afford proper matter for criticism.—Genius is always eccentrick, bold, and daring; which, at the same time that it commands attention, is sure to provoke criticism, It is the regular, cold, and timid composer, who escapes censure, and deserves no praise.

The elevated situation on which Rubens stands in the esteem of the world is alone a sufficient reason for some examination of his pretensions.

His fame is extended over a great part of the Continent, without a rival: and it may be justly said that he has enriched his country, not in a figurative sense only, by the great examples of art

CHARACTER OF RUBENS.

which he left, but by what some would think a more solid advantage, the wealth arising from the concourse of strangers whom his works continually invite to Antwerp, which would otherwise have little to reward the visit of a connoisseur.

To the city of Dusseldorp he has been an equal benefactor. The gallery of that city is considered as containing one of the greatest collections of pictures in the world; but if the works of Rubens were taken from it, I will venture to assert, that this great repository would be reduced to at least half its value.

To extend his glory still further, he gives to Paris one of its most striking features, the LUXEMBOURG GALLERY*: and if to these we add the many

* This was written before France had been disgraced, and plundered, and desolate, by the unparalleled atrocities of those sanguinary and ferocious savages, who for seven years past [1798] have deluged

towns, churches, and private cabinets, where a single picture of Rubens confers eminence, we cannot hesitate to place him in the first rank of illustrious painters.

CHARACTER OF RUBENS.

that country with blood; while they have waged war against every principle that binds man to man: against all the arts and all the elegancies of life; against beauty, virtue, law, social order, true liberty, religion, and even humanity itself. The collection of the Luxembourg gallery, representing Henry the Fourth, Mary of Medicis, and their children, with all the splendour of royalty, has without doubt long since fallen a sacrifice to their barbarous rage, and shared the same fate with his fine statue of that monarch, which formerly stood on the Pont Neuf, and which has been battered to pieces. —The other great collection of pictures, however, of which Paris formerly boasted, that of the PALAIS ROYAL, has not suffered among the numerous works of art which have been destroyed; having been fortunately saved from their merciless fangs by the necessities and precaution of the owner, the detestable author and fomenter of their iniquities; who, happily for the world, though most cruelly, basely, and unjustly, so far as regards the perpetrators of the act, was some time since worried and mangled by those hell-hounds which he let loose against mankind. Previously to

CHARACTER OF RUBENS.

Though I still entertain the same general opinion both in regard to his excellencies and his defects, yet having now seen his greatest compositions, where he has more means of displaying those parts of his art in which he particularly excelled, my estimation of his genius is of course raised. It is only in large compositions that his powers seem to have room to expand themselves. They really increase in proportion to the size of the canvass on which they are to be displayed. His superiority is not seen in easel pictures, nor even in detached parts of his greater works; which are seldom eminently beautiful. It does not lie in an attitude, or in any peculiar expression, but in the general effect, in the genius

his being murdered by his fellow-regicides, the Duke of Orleans contrived to dispose of the whole of his great collection, which was sent to England. The Flemish part of it was sold in London in the year 1793, and the pictures of the Italian school are safely preserved in the same metropolis. M.

which pervades and illuminates the whole. CHARACTER OF RUBENS.

I remember to have observed in a picture of Diatreci, which I saw in a private cabinet at Brussels, the contrary effect. In that performance there appeared to be a total absence of this pervading genius; though every individual figure was correctly drawn, and to the action of each as careful an attention was paid, as if it were a set Academy figure. Here seemed to be nothing left to chance; all the nymphs (the subject was the Bath of Diana) were what the ladies call in attitudes: yet, without being able to censure it for incorrectness or any other defect, I thought it one of the coldest and most insipid pictures I ever beheld.

The works of Rubens have that peculiar property always attendant on genius, to attract attention, and enforce admiration in spite of all their faults. It is owing to this fascinating power that

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the performances of those painters with which he is surrounded, though they have perhaps fewer defects, yet appear spiritless, tame, and insipid; such as the altar-pieces of Crayer, Schut, Segers, Huysum, Tyssens, Van Balen, and the rest. They are done by men whose hands, and indeed all their faculties, appear to have been cramped and confined: and it is evident that every thing they did was the effect of great labour and pains. The productions of Rubens, on the contrary, seem to flow with a freedom and prodigality, as if they cost him nothing; and to the general animation of the composition there is always a correspondent spirit in the execution of the work. The striking brilliancy of his colours, and their lively opposition to each other, the flowing liberty and freedom of his outline, the animated pencil with which every object is touched, all contribute to awaken and keep alive the attention of the spectator; awaken in him, in some mea-

sure, correspondent sensations, and make him feel a degree of that enthusiasm with which the painter was carried away. To this we may add the complete uniformity in all the parts of the work, so that the whole seems to be conducted, and grow out of one mind: every thing is of a piece, and fits its place. Even his taste of drawing and of form appears to correspond better with his colouring and composition, than if he had adopted any other manner, though that manner, simply considered, might be better; it is here as in personal attractions; there is frequently found a certain agreement and correspondence in the whole together, which is often more captivating than mere regular beauty.

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Rubens appears to have had that confidence in himself, which it is necessary for every artist to assume, when he has finished his studies, and may venture in some measure to throw aside the fetters of authority; to con-

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sider the rules as subject to his controul, and not himself subject to the rules; to risk and to dare extraordinary attempts without a guide, abandoning himself to his own sensations, and depending upon them. To this confidence must be imputed that originality of manner by which he may be truly said to have extended the limits of the art. After Rubens had made up his manner, he never looked out of himself for assistance: there is consequently very little in his works, that appears to be taken from other masters. If he has borrowed any thing, he has had the address to change and adapt it so well to the rest of his work, that the theft is not discoverable.

Beside the excellency of Rubens in these general powers, he possessed the true art of imitating. He saw the objects of nature with a painter's eye; he saw at once the predominant feature by which every object is known and distinguished: and as soon as seen, it

was executed with a facility that is astonishing: and let me add, this facility is to a painter, when he closely examines a picture, a source of great pleasure. How far this excellence may be perceived or felt by those who are not painters, I know not: to them certainly it is not enough that objects be truly represented; they must likewise be represented with grace; which means here, that the work is done with facility and without effort. Rubens was, perhaps, the greatest master in the mechanical part of the art, the best workman with his tools, that ever exercised a pencil.

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This part of the art, though it does not hold a rank with the powers of invention, of giving character and expression, has yet in it what may be called genius. It is certainly something that cannot be taught by words, though it may be learned by a frequent examination of those pictures which possess this excellence. It is felt by very few

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Painters; and it is as rare at this time among the living Painters as any of the higher excellencies of the art.

This power, which Rubens possessed in the highest degree, enabled him to represent whatever he undertook better than any other painter. His animals, particularly lions and horses, are so admirable, that it may be said they were never properly represented but by him. His portraits rank with the best works of the Painters who have made that branch of the art the sole business of their lives; and of those he has left a great variety of specimens. The same may be said of his landscapes; and though Claude Lorrain finished more minutely, as becomes a Professor in any particular branch, yet there is such an airiness and facility in the landscapes of Rubens, that a painter would as soon wish to be the author of them, as those of Claude, or any other artist whatever.

The pictures of Rubens have this

effect on the spectator, that he feels himself in no wise disposed to pick out and dwell on his defects. The criticisms which are made on him are indeed often unreasonable. His style ought no more to be blamed for not having the sublimity of Michael Angelo, than Ovid should be censured because he is not like Virgil. CHARACTER OF RUBENS.

However, it must be acknowledged that he wanted many excellencies, which would have perfectly united with his style. Among those we may reckon beauty in his female characters: sometimes indeed they make approaches to it; they are healthy and comely women, but seldom, if ever, possess any degree of elegance: the same may be said of his young men and children: his old men have that sort of dignity which a bushy beard will confer; but he never possessed a poetical conception of character. In his representations of the highest characters in the christian or the fabulous world, instead of something above humanity, which might fill the

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idea which is conceived of such beings, the spectator finds little more than mere mortals, such as he meets with every day.

The incorrectness of Rubens in regard to his outline oftner proceeds from haste and carelessness, than from inability: there are in his great works, to which he seems to have paid more particular attention, naked figures as eminent for their drawing as for their colouring. He appears to have entertained a great abhorrence of the meagre dry manner of his predecessors, the old German and Flemish Painters; to avoid which, he kept his outline large and flowing: this carried to an extreme, produced that heaviness which is so frequently found in his figures. Another defect of this great painter is his inattention to the foldings of his drapery, especially that of his women: it is scarcely ever cast with any choice or skill.

Carlo Maratti and Rubens are in this

respect in opposite extremes; one discovers too much art in the disposition of drapery, and the other too little. Rubens's drapery, besides, is not properly historical; the quality of the stuff of which it is composed, is too accurately distinguished; resembling the manner of Paul Veronese. This drapery is less offensive in Rubens than it would be in many other painters, as it partly contributes to that richness which is the peculiar character of his style, which we do not pretend to set forth as of the most simple and sublime kind. CHARACTER OF RUBENS.

The difference of the manner of Rubens, from that of any other painter before him, is in nothing more distinguishable, than in his colouring, which is totally different from that of Titian, Correggio, or any of the great colourists. The effect of his pictures may be not improperly compared to clusters of flowers; all his colours appear as clear and as beautiful: at the same time he has avoided that tawdry effect which one

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would expect such gay colours to produce; in this respect resembling Barocci more than any other painter. What was said of an antient painter, may be applied to those two artists,—that their figures look as if they fed upon roses.

It would be a curious and a profitable study for a painter to examine the difference and the cause of that difference of effect in the works of Correggio and Rubens, both excellent in different ways. The preference probably would be given according to the different habits of the connoisseur: those who had received their first impressions from the works of Rubens would censure Correggio as heavy; and the admirers of Correggio would say Rubens wanted solidity of effect. There is lightness, airiness, and facility in Rubens, his advocates will urge, and comparatively a laborious heaviness in Correggio: whose admirers will complain of Rubens's manner being careless and unfinished, whilst the works of Correggio are wrought to the highest

degree of delicacy: and what may be advanced in favour of Correggio's breadth of light will by his censurers be called affected and pedantick. It must be observed that we are speaking solely of the manner, the effect of the picture; and we may conclude, according to the custom in pastoral poetry, by bestowing on each of these illustrious painters a garland, without attributing superiority to either.

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To conclude; I will venture to repeat in favour of Rubens, what I have before said in regard to the Dutch school,—that those who cannot see the extraordinary merit of this great painter, either have a narrow conception of the variety of art, or are led away by the affectation of approving nothing but what comes from the Italian school.

THE END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

C. and R. Baldwin, Printers,
New Bridge-Street, London.

96-B25729